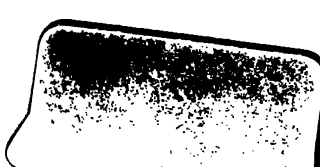

DIALOGUE V.

# CONVERSATIONS

WITH

# COUSIN RACHEL.

PART III.

LONDON:

JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,

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## DIALOGUE I.

*John.* Well, girls, if you have a mind to come and see the new church this afternoon, I can take you there. Mr. Talbot has given me a holyday, and said I might step home if I liked, to take a walk with you and cousin Rachel. He said he should like her to see the church.

*Ellen.* I am so sorry! Rachel is not well to-day. She did just get to church this morn-

ing; but it was as much as she could do, and she is up-stairs now, resting herself. She looks very poorly.

*Ann.* That she often does, and seems sometimes as if she could hardly walk about; but she never complains.

*Rachel* [*comes in*]. Ah, John, I thought I heard your voice. I came down to see you.

J. I wish you were better, cousin. I came to take a walk with you and Ann and Ellen. Don't you think a walk would do you good?

R. Not one of *your* walks, John, I am afraid. When you do take your sisters out, you go a good way with them. Where are you going this afternoon? I think I can guess. You are going to the new church; and a fine afternoon you have got for it; according to the old saying,

> "St. Barnaby bright,
> The longest day and the shortest night."

It is not the longest day and the shortest night now, but it is St. Barnaby bright; and I hope you will enjoy it, and have a cool, clear evening to come back. I know your mother can spare you to-day; at least, I am pretty sure of it. Of course you will ask her before you put on your bonnets; and we shall have tea ready for you when you come back. You will have time to see your sisters home again, John?

J. Yes, Rachel; but we want you to go too.

R. And I want myself to go with you, but I can't to-day. It was as much as I could do to creep to church this morning. By the by, John, how came it that we did not see you?

J. I did not go to my usual place this morning.

E. I was sure you were there; you never miss church on saints' days.

J. No; Mr. Talbot always sends me.

E. But you like to go?

J. To be sure.

R. Now you had better look for your mother, and then get your bonnets, that you may have plenty of time.

A. [*goes, and comes back.*] Mother has stepped out to Mrs. Willis's, so we must wait till she comes in.

R. John must sit still, to gossip with us a little longer.

J. Yes; I want to have a little talk with you, cousin, before we go. I am so sorry you can't come with us. I wanted to bring you round by the old Hall, that you might see where we are at work on the old garden that was, clearing it up a little. Mr. Talbot is so fond of that old place.

R. Ah, he remembers it all his life. I believe he used to play there with his sister,

when they were little. Mrs. Andrews used to tell me about them; you know she was their aunt.

J. He was quite cut up, when he came home from India, and found the old house pulled down, and nothing left but that bit of garden, which was all overgrown.

A. But how was it, John? how came it to be pulled down?

J. I heard all about it from Mr. Turner.

E. He that was in India with Mr. Talbot, and came home with him?

A. What, he that sits near you at church?

J. Yes, the same. He is a well-spoken man, and likes to talk about his master. You see, this Mr. Talbot's cousin had the old Hall when their grandfather died. (Their grandfather was husband to the old Lady Talbot that mother talks about.) But he no ways fancied it as our Mr. Talbot does; his mind was more set upon hunting and racing, and such things, than on old houses, as Mr. Turner gave me to understand. So he pulled it down. He talked a great deal about building up a fine new house; but he met with an accident out hunting, and died before the new building was begun. And then his cousin, Mr. Philip Talbot, that was in India, was sent for home to be owner of the place. But the house was pulled down, and could not be built up again,—I mean, not as it was before,—

and Mr. Philip had no mind for a new house such as his cousin fancied. Indeed, he had small heart for any house at all; for his wife died in India, and two little boys that he had: so he came home quite a lone man; and he has made the keeper's house just fit for himself to live in, with now and then a friend; and all his heart is in the building of this new church at Alford. He is there every day, looking on at the work, and giving orders.

A. And, they say, working himself sometimes.

J. Yes. All his pleasure seems in the new church, besides reading good books on Sundays, and week-days too, and doing any thing kind to his neighbours and workmen. He *is* a kind gentleman. I should like to work for him all my life.

[*Mrs. Randall comes in.*]

A. and E. Mother, may we go out walking with John this evening?

Mrs. R. Yes, if John can see you safe home again.

J. I can do that, mother; but I am so vexed that Rachel can't go.

R. Well, John, perhaps I may be less of an old woman another day; and in the mean time I shall hear all that Ann and Ellen can tell when they come back.

*Rachel.* Now, then, let us have the history of your walk.

*Ellen.* We kept to the left hand of the old Hall as we went, and climbed up Headburn Hill, at least nearly to the top of it; but instead of going quite to the top, we kept still to the left, along a nice soft green track on the down. Nice walking it was, and the thyme smelled sweet as we trod on it. We stopped to gather some of the little flowers that grew down in the grass, till John told us we must get on; and then we made more haste, and came at last to some trees that were shady and pleasant; for the sun was hot still, only the air on the down was fresh.

*Ann.* If you make such a long history of it, Ellen, we shall not have done till bedtime: and Rachel knows all about Headburn Hill, I dare say.

E. Well, we came out beyond those trees, on another bit of down, and then—

A. And then, a little further on, just round the corner of some rising ground, we came in sight of the church. How pretty it looked, with the trees about it, and the spire rising up above them!

E. And then John told us the stone for the spire had been brought from a great way

off. He told us a great deal about it, that he heard from James Beacher, who works there.

A. Then we made haste down the hill, and we found the workmen just going away; but John stopped James Beacher, and he let us into the church.

E. Then James told us about all the parts of the church, and what the new clergyman (he is Mr. Talbot's brother-in-law, you know,) told him, when he came there. Now, it is odd, but I have forgot what the east end, the handsomest end, is called.

*John.* The end where the Altar is? The chancel; that ought to be the handsomest.

A. Why should it be better than any other part, if it is all God's house, Rachel?

R. John knows, I dare say.

J. I think I can answer it; for James Beacher was telling me what the clergyman said.

E. Oh, tell it all to us! do!

J. He said it was because it is the holiest part. It is the part in which the holy mystery of the Lord's Supper takes place, and where our Lord Jesus Christ is particularly present.

R. We have heard our own minister say that, you may remember; that it is at the holy altar (in the chancel) that our Lord manifests Himself most fully to the faithful,

giving Himself to them to be their food and nourishment, in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

J. So we understand why the east end is most holy, and is most ornamented on that account?

E. That is right, to be sure.

A. And that is the reason, is it not, why people turn to it when they say the creeds and their prayers?

R. It helps them to think and pray with more attention, when they look towards it.

E. Rachel, it is beautiful, and you must go to see it.

R. I hope I shall; but tell me about it.

E. The sun could not come in on that side, you know, in the evening; but there was a gleam, strong and bright, that came in at the west window, just before the sun went down; and it played upon the wall so beautifully.

J. If you could see the sun come in the morning through the painted windows in the chancel, all green and gold, and purple and red, brighter than any thing you ever saw! It made me think, the first time I saw it, of St. John's account of the heavenly Jerusalem, in the 21st chapter of Revelations.

R. It must be very pleasant, and useful too, to be made to think of heaven, by the beautiful light that shines across the church,

when we are praying in it. But tell me something more.

A. Oh, about the font. James Beacher was told about that: that it was put down close to the door at the west end of the church, to shew us that holy Baptism is the door or entrance into the Church of Christ.

E. And that we could not go into the body of the church, and especially not near the altar, without passing by the font; that is to remind us that we cannot enjoy the privileges of Christ's family, unless we are baptised into His family, and keep faithful to our vows.

R. Is it a large font?

A. Oh, yes! large enough to dip a young child in. So people who wish to have a child dipped in the water, can have it done, if the child can bear it.

E. There was an opening inside of the font, with a stopper in it, that the water afterwards may be let off into the ground.

J. All fonts were made so in former times, James said.

E. There is a lid on the top of the font, made of oak, quite dark and shining, with things (I don't know what they are called) cut upon the edges of it.

A. And a beautiful thing carved like leaves at the top of it: it looks very handsome.

E. And words from the Bible, in great gold letters, of such a pretty shape, all round

the rim of it. I could hardly read them, they are so old-fashioned; only John knew them.

A. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism:" those were the words.

R. The shape of the church is a cross, is it not?

J. Yes. There is the nave, the long part of the cross, and those two parts running out on each side.

A. I never recollect what they are called.

J. The transepts. I made Ellen spell the word, and then she remembered it. I had read it often in the drawing of the church—the plans of it, I mean.

E. The upper part of the cross is the east end, the chancel.

J. That is the part Beacher said was meant for the clergy only, in former times.

R. In some churches it is separated from the body of the church, the nave, by a handsome wooden screen—a carved one. I have seen such in a very small village-church. It has been taken away since; and very sorry I was.

J. And the nave, or body of the church, is for all the people. James Beacher shewed us a book full of plans of churches. The very small ones had no transepts, and some had aisles.

R. Like cathedrals?

J. Yes, as if the body was divided into

three, with rows of pillars; and some had only one aisle at one side.

E. And cathedrals, he said, had so many different parts, he could not remember them.

A. Well, but we must end our story; for John is getting ready to go, I see.

E. Oh, there is not much more to tell. Only we got to the old Hall just about sunset —I mean the place where the old Hall was: it is a mournful-looking place, I think. The old overgrown garden looked so sad; but John shewed us where they are clearing it out, and he told us how pretty it would look when it is done. While we were there, Mr. Talbot came up. He spoke to us very kindly, and asked after father and mother, and particularly after you, Rachel; for he said you seemed like an old friend to him, on his aunt's account. Very kind and pleasant-spoken he was. And as he saw us looking at the roses that grew there so plentifully, even in that desert-looking place, he told us we might gather some: and there they are—such nice ones! We brought them for you.

R. [*Takes them.*] Thank you. How sweet they are! And they remind me, I think I can give you something in return.

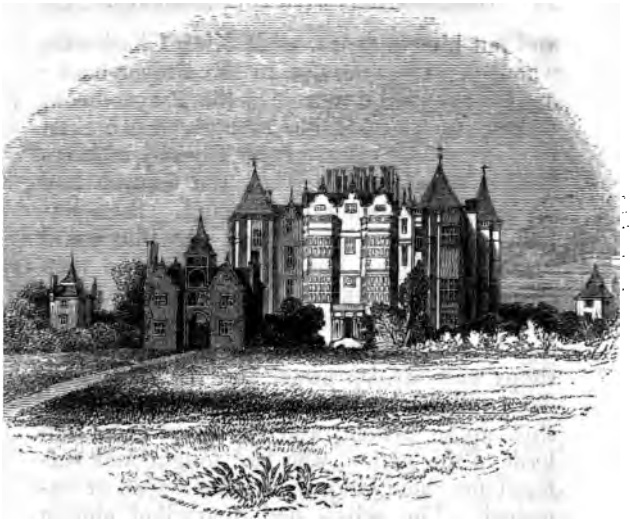
A. What, Rachel?

R. I have got a story that Mr. Philip Talbot made long ago to amuse his sister,

when she was ill. Mrs. Andrews set me to copy it. I will look for it to read to you.

A. and E. We shall like that.

R. There will not be time to-night; but the first spare hour we have, you shall hear it.



The Hall.

*Lucy.* Here we all are, Rachel, every one of us, to hear the story. Ann and Ellen and I have got our work; and Jenny has brought her scraps, and her long needleful of thread, and William is at his basket-work. Will you begin?

*Rachel.* Yes; but before you can understand the story, you must hear what comes first about the *true* history of those times.

It is now nearly 200 years since the people of this country rebelled against their king,

the rim of it. I could
are so old-fashioned;
A. "One Lord, o
those were the words.
R. The shape of t
it not?
J. Yes. There is
of the cross, and thos
on each side.
A. I never recolle
J. The transepts.
word, and then she
read it often in the d
the plans of it, I mea
E. The upper par
end, the chancel.
J. That is the part
for the clergy only, in
R. In some church
the body of the church
some wooden screen—
seen such in a very s
has been taken away
was.
J. And the nave, o
for all the people.
us a book full of plans
small ones had no t
aisles.
R. Like cathedrals
J. Yes, as if the

even privately. This oppression was sometimes greater, sometimes less, according as it suited Cromwell's interests to favour one set of people or another, or according as his conscience at times reproached him for his conduct to the king, and to the king's faithful subjects.

## History of Ambrose Herne.

At the time when this story begins, Oliver Cromwell was established in his power, and King Charles II. was driven from the kingdom.

Ambrose Herne, whose story you are to hear, was an orphan, and was brought up by his uncle; but you must know first who his parents were, before you are told about the life he led in his uncle's house. Stephen Herne, the father of Ambrose, was a tenant of Sir Francis Egerton of Marstone Hall, and lived in a farm of his till the rebellion began. His wife Mildred had been a waiting-maid to Lady Egerton, the mother of Sir Francis; and they were both much attached to the family. They lived happily and peacefully till the beginning of the troubles; but when Sir Francis raised a troop to serve the king, Stephen was among the first to belong to it; and he fought bravely and loyally in the good cause. He left his wife and his infant son at Marstone Hall, under the care of the good Lady Egerton; and when he died in battle, they remained there still, and Mildred was comforted and protected by her kind mistress; but though she bore her affliction patiently, she did not live many years after it, and the orphan

Ambrose was soon left altogether friendless; for Marstone Hall was seized by the rebels, and Lady Egerton was taken to prison. It was then that his uncle Richard took him into his house, and brought him up with his own children.

Richard Herne had never served his king as Stephen had; nor had he, like Stephen, remained faithful to the Church, but had listened to the new teachers, who drew people away from their loyalty, and taught them that rebellion was no sin. After the king's death, he lived in ease and plenty, and his brother Stephen's farm was given to him, instead of being inherited by Ambrose. He let his nephew share in the plenty of his house; but Ambrose was not happy there. It was not because he had been deprived of his father's property that he was not happy—he was too young to think about that; but he could not forget his mother, nor those things which his mother taught him. She had taught him to say the Lord's prayer and the creed as soon as he could speak, and these were never repeated in his uncle's house. She had taken him every Sunday to church; and as soon as he could read, she had made him follow the service in her Prayer-book, and join in the responses. But his uncle had no Prayer-book; and when he went to church, it was to hear the prayers said by the new ministers, after their own fancy. His mother had taught him to speak of holy things in few words, and those full of reverence; to fear to dishonour God's holy Name; to go humbly and quietly into His presence; to kneel and to bow before Him. But in his uncle's house holy things were spoken of rashly, hastily, and disrespectfully.

When they went to church, they did not uncover their heads; and when they prayed to the high God who is in heaven, it was in such a manner as would have been too bold to an earthly father or master. His mother had taught him to think with grateful pleasure and humble awe of the blessings of his Baptism, and the vow which was then made for him; and to look forward to receiving the confirmation of those blessings, by the laying on of the bishop's hands, and renewing his vow before the congregation. She had taught him to look on, beyond this, to the other holy Sacrament, which was to bring him into full communion with Christ and His Church. But his uncle thought lightly of Sacraments, and renounced the authority of bishops. He followed one minister or another, after his own fancy, and obeyed none except as he felt inclined. His mother had taught him that God's word bids us honour the king, and his uncle told him that he had no king: for he who had reigned over England was now dead, and his son was a wanderer in a foreign land. Ambrose was not happy, for he could not forget his mother and her instructions. His heart never opened to his uncle; nor, indeed, did the hearts of Richard Herne's own children open to him. He was a stern man, not unkind in his family, but severe and rigid. He wished his sons and nephew to be religious after his notions of religion; and he talked much to them, and expected them to talk much of it. His eldest son, Simon, talked of it as much as he could wish, and in the very words that Richard taught him. He copied his father's manner, and was grave and strict like him. He wished to be

thought religious; and so he made up for the want of a really religious heart, which would have produced a reverent and becoming demeanour, by affecting a constant seriousness.

The next son, Ralph, took a contrary turn; he was disgusted by the talk of which he heard so much, avoided his father's presence, and followed as much as he could his own inclinations.

Ambrose kept aloof, not understood by either; treated not unkindly, but feeling a continual loneliness of heart.

Richard Herne did not live at the farm near Marstone Hall, which had belonged to his brother Stephen, and Ambrose had never been there since he lived with his uncle; but when he was about fourteen, his cousin Simon, who was several years older than himself, was sent to the Marstone farm to look after Richard Herne's concerns there, and Ambrose was sent with him to work under him, and learn farming. Ralph went too, and both were glad of the change; but their reasons for being glad were partly the same, and partly different. Both were glad to escape from the strictness and severity of Richard Herne's house, and hoped to enjoy more liberty and see more variety. Ralph looked forward only to this, and felt like a bird let out of a cage. Ambrose felt this, but he felt more besides; he longed to see his birthplace again, and to remember every spot where he had been with his mother. His heart was heavy when he thought of her, yet it beat fast, and seemed to be longing restlessly after something that he had lost; for he was sure that he had forgotten much of his mother's teaching, and had left

off many of the good ways in which she brought him up; and he feared that he was altogether worse than he had been then.

When he came to Marstone, the trouble of his mind increased. Simon Herne did not look after his brother and cousin so closely as his father had done: when they had finished their day's business, he left them to follow their own devices; for he found that they paid little heed to the advice he gave them as to spending their leisure hours. They did not respect him, and so he had no influence over them. Ralph called him a hypocrite, and Ambrose did not love to look at his countenance. They used to amuse themselves together; for though Ambrose could not find a *friend* in Ralph, he found a *companion* in him; and sometimes he lost, in active sports and bold adventures, the yearning for his mother and her instructions which still followed him, and was more keenly awakened by recollections of the farm and its neighbourhood, which sometimes saddened him, so that he could hardly keep from tears, or pricked him like an evil conscience, because he did not now live as he had lived with his mother.

One Sunday evening in June, Ambrose wandered out alone; Ralph had gone home the day before to his father's; and Simon was gone to hear a second sermon, after listening to one of several hours' length in the morning, which had wearied Ambrose so, that he refused to go with him again. He could not make up his mind to listen to more of that loud preaching; and though it gave him pain when Simon told him, as he went away, that he had no religion, still he stayed behind, and thought

sadly of all which had passed away from him; all which he thought he knew to be indeed religion, but which had left his half-instructed soul desolate and sad. He would not spend the Sunday evening in roaming about with a party of wild lads, who came to invite him out when Simon was gone; he could not bear to do that; he could not bear to hear them speak mockingly of religion. He thought Simon's was not the right sort, but religion he knew and felt *was* a reality. He wandered out alone, trying to retrace the places which he had known in his childhood; he wandered on till he came into an orchard, and, passing through it, he came to a low door in a wall; he thought it must lead into the garden of the Hall, and he went in eagerly; it was a sad, deserted garden; the paths were overgrown; and here and there flowers were struggling through the thick underwood which covered the ground: he made his way among the briars and tangled copsewood, till he came out upon an open terrace, raised above the rest of the garden, on which the sun was shining as it sunk in the west. It was a bright summer evening; and the country spread below him looked beautiful in the low rays of the sun. On each side of the terrace-walk was a flower-border, neglected and overgrown, with weeds mixed among the flowers; but not so choked up as the flowers which he had passed before.

At the end of the walk there was an arbour overgrown with creepers, and by it a rose-tree in full bloom. Ambrose sat down upon the mossy seat within the arbour, and thoughts crowded *upon him*; for he remembered the spot where he

now found himself, though the garden was so altered since he was last there. A lively recollection rose before his mind of a summer evening like this, when a lady sat upon that seat in the arbour—a lady advanced in years, who wore round her neck a lace ruff, and had on a dark coloured gown, that hung about her in thick, heavy folds. He called to mind that good Lady Egerton who used to speak kindly to him, and stroked his head and caressed him. He remembered playing near this arbour whilst his mother, dressed in black, stood by the lady's side. He thought he could see again his mother's pale, mild face; and the tears came into his eyes. Then, almost without thinking what he did, he stretched out his hand as he sat, and gathered a rosebud from the rose-tree that stood close by; and as he held it, more recollections came into his mind. That lady had been talking earnestly to his mother, and whilst she talked had pointed to a rosebud; and he had heard some of the words she said, whilst he played quietly on the grass beside them. She had said that the bud must unfold slowly, and that any one who forced it open would spoil its beauty. So children's hearts burst open, she said, by degrees, to the love of God and of holy things, and would not at once shew the love that was growing within them. Ambrose remembered that quite distinctly, and the thoughtful look with which his mother listened to the lady, and then the fond look with which she bent down her eyes on him. As he thought of it, his tears flowed fast. If he could but see his mother once again! If he could but hear her speak, and tell him the meaning of what

he dimly remembered, and tell him what he ought to do; whether he had indeed grown so wicked as he sometimes feared he had; whether, as his uncle and cousin told him, he had no love of God. Had his heart shut up, instead of opening? Had his love lessened, instead of growing? He could not talk, as Simon did, about his love of God; yet he could not speak lightly, as he had sometimes grieved to hear Ralph speak. No one understood him; no one told him what he wanted to hear. He did not know where to find a guide; he felt as if every thing which he had begun to reverence in his childhood had been swept away, and was no where to be found. He did not know that the Church cannot be destroyed—that no human power can prevail against it. He did not know that the Church is a Mother who cannot die—who will not forsake her children. He hid his face between his hands, and cried long and bitterly. When he looked about him again, the sun was set, and in the clear twilight sky one star was shining, He got up and walked back along the terrace, still holding the rosebud in his hand. Presently he saw a light through the trees; and looking in that direction, he guessed that it came from the old Hall, and went on towards it.

He made his way down through the trees to the house. As he came near, he saw some figures passing silently among the trees, and entering by a low doorway at the back of the house. He followed them—for the door stood open; and when he looked in, he saw a large room, in which a number of persons were ranging themselves, as if for a religious service. At a door on the opposite

side a clergyman came in, dressed in a surplice. Ambrose started at the sight, for he had not seen such a dress worn since the time when he went to church with his mother. He knew that the minister who wore it must be one of that order who were appointed by our Lord to take care of His flock, and that on him the bishop's hands had been laid. He took his place among the congregation, kneeling first, as he saw the rest do, before they sat down.

Presently the clergyman began to read, and Ambrose knew the Evening Service of the Church. He remembered the first sentence and the exhortation; and at the confession he knelt down and repeated the words after the minister. He listened whilst the absolution was pronounced; and when the Lord's prayer was read he joined in it aloud; for he repeated it daily by himself, though he had not heard it since he left this house. And when the Psalms for the day were given out, and then the chapters, it brought back to Ambrose such a remembrance of the regular succession of services to which he was once accustomed, that his heart felt as full as it had done just before on the terrace; but now it was with pleasure and hope, instead of despondency. It almost seemed to him like a dream, and he felt afraid of waking from it. When the service was ended, the clergyman preached to his flock. He exhorted them to patience under their troubles and difficulties, and to perseverance in the old ways of their holy Mother, the Church; he spoke of the quietness and confidence in which is strength.

Ambrose had never heard any one speak as this

clergyman did; for he spoke as the commissioned minister of God, calmly relying on the dignity of his office, and the might that was with him. The boy could not take his eyes from that tranquil countenance; and his ears drank in every sound of the soft voice, which spoke so gently, and yet so awfully, as in the presence of the Master who sent him; whose message he delivered with no such rude gestures or loud tones as Ambrose was accustomed to see, to hear, and to shrink from. He spoke to the baptised children of God in the name of the Father Who was watching them; he spoke to the members of Christ, Who had promised to be present among the two or three gathered together; he spoke to the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and warned them not to forfeit their inheritance. Ambrose looked and listened as awe-struck, and yet charmed; he listened till the sermon ended, and all fell on their knees for the parting prayer and the blessing. That blessing came upon the heart of Ambrose with peace and refreshment, exhausted as he felt from the rush of thoughts which the last few hours had brought. After all the rest of the congregation had risen and gone out, Ambrose remained still kneeling—still with his hands pressed before his eyes. When at last he looked up, he saw the clergyman alone, watching him with an inquiring, but kind expression. He started up then; and before he had time to decide whether he dared approach one for whom he felt a deep reverence, the minister of God stood close by him, and in a mild tone asked from whence he came.

"You seem," he said, "to be a stranger here."

"I am," replied Ambrose, with a faltering voice. "I came hither by chance this evening."

"Not by chance, I would believe, but rather by the guidance of Providence; if, as it seems, the words of our holy service have fallen on unaccustomed but not indifferent ears. Is it so, that this holy service is strange to you?"

"O no, not strange!" said Ambrose, gathering courage; "I used to hear it once, when my mother was living. I always heard it then." And while he spoke, his eyes again filled with tears.

The clergyman looked at him kindly, tenderly; more tenderly, Ambrose thought, than any countenance had looked on him since his mother died; or at least since he left the friends with whom his mother had lived.

"Have you lost your mother, then, my poor boy? Have you no mother living?"

"No, sir; I am an orphan."

"And with whom do you live?"

"With my uncle; but I am staying now with my cousin at the farm—Marstone farm."

"With Simon Herne? Is he your cousin? Can it be that you are the son of Stephen Herne, that faithful servant of the Egertons and of the king? You are not his son?"

"I am his son," Ambrose replied. The clergyman took his hand eagerly. "My boy, are you indeed the son of that true-hearted man, and of that gentle Mildred whom Lady Egerton loved so much? O that this house could receive you now! But I am its lonely inhabitant, ministering to my flock in secret, and without means to provide for your necessities, even were you able and willing

to part from your relations. I can do nothing for you," he ended, in a dejected tone.

"O sir," said Ambrose, with an impulse which overcame his shyness, "you can do all for me."

The clergyman looked at him earnestly, and understood his meaning. "My child," he said, "God can do all for you. But you rightly reprove my unbelief. Here is still a refuge, whilst one servant of God remains to speak in His name, to offer up the prayers of His Church. Yes; here is your refuge. Come hither as often as you can, and as privately as may be, without deceit. You shall ever find a welcome. Let the words which you have heard already be your farewell for to-night. In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

Ambrose carried home those words in his heart, and they became the watchword of his life. In quietness and in confidence he found strength. From that Sunday evening he came daily to Mr. Vincent to receive his instructions, and he shared in all the services of the Church. Eagerly he listened, and deeply he treasured what he heard, and endeavoured to practise it in his daily course. At home he worked diligently at his uncle's business; and by his private prayers he sought and gained continual help.

Mr. Vincent was always kind and tender towards him, but not weakly indulgent. He required much from his pupil, and shewed him how to perform much in a power that was not his own. Ambrose, who had been disgusted and discouraged by the teaching he had hitherto heard, received Mr. Vincent's with entire submission, and with firm

purpose to act upon it. If any precept seemed hard, he strove but the more earnestly to fulfil it, and took a pleasure in the effort it cost him to get the better of himself. Day by day he felt his mind more at rest; and as the rosebud slowly unfolds to perfect beauty, so did this young Christian grow to Christian holiness. Thus passed his days in trial, yet in peace. He had to bear ill-humour and coldness from Simon, harshness from his uncle, ridicule from Ralph. When, by degrees, they discovered his intercourse with Mr. Vincent, they employed all that reproach and mockery could do in the way of persecution; and when actual persecution was stirred up against Mr. Vincent, Ambrose shared his dangers and his troubles.

At length the time arrived when King Charles II. was restored to his kingdom; and with him those returned to England who had been banished for his sake. Sir Francis Egerton was one of them, and he came to live again at Marstone Hall. Richard Herne was now dead, and Simon occupied the farm. Ambrose made no attempt to have him removed, and regain possession of it; but when Sir Francis sent for him, as the son of an old servant of the family, and asked what he could do for him, he gratefully accepted the offer of being received into his service. He had a recollection of Sir Francis in his own boyhood; and he entered on his service with a happy heart, full of zeal for his master, and full of thankfulness for the fulfilment of all his long-cherished wishes. The old village-church was now open again for the performance of the service which had been continued in secret during the years of trouble; the font which

had been hidden, in order to save it from injury, stood again by the ancient doorway; the holy Table was restored to the east end of the church; and the fragments of painted glass, which had been preserved when the windows were shattered by the rebels, were now replaced with the best care and skill. Mr. Vincent, who had for several years before the rebellion served the church of Marstone as curate to the aged rector, and had remained still watching over his flock after the church was closed to him, now returned to the discharge of all his duties. And daily did the sound of the church-bell gladden the heart of Ambrose, and its open door invite him to enter those holy courts with praise, to fall down and worship.

Yet harder trials than those of the days of persecution were now to come upon Ambrose: they came from an unexpected source, from his own master. Sir Francis had returned other than he went. In his wandering life he had taken up idle, dissipated habits, and when he came home, he led a life of rioting and wastefulness. Those long-deserted walls of the old manor-house echoed with sounds of clamour and profaneness, sadder to Ambrose than their former silence and solitariness. He did not feel tempted to join in such mirth, as many of his fellow-servants did; it gave him too much pain. He did not feel inclined to change his long-established habits; but he found himself oppressed and confused by evil example where he expected good. He found it difficult to reconcile duty and obedience to his master with stedfast resistance to evil. Still he persevered. He said nothing about his difficulties—*nothing*, except to

Mr. Vincent, and even to him but little of that which concerned others than himself, but went on steadily and sadly.

It was the Whitsuntide following the year of the king's restoration, when, on an evening bright as that on which he first met with Mr. Vincent, Ambrose went alone to the same flower-border, where the rosebud had once recalled so many thoughts to his mind. He came there in a sorrowful mood, though of a different kind from that which had formerly possessed him. He had just risen from a scene of riotous festivity, in which his master's tenants and servants were indulging,—alas! to celebrate the holy festival! Ralph was amongst them, and Simon—yes, Simon having once been persuaded to join in mirth, which he had formerly condemned in its most innocent form, had not known where to stop; and no longer supported by the praise of strictness, he plunged headlong into sinful pleasures.

Ambrose had left them, pursued, as usual, by mockery and the reproach of hypocrisy. He came to his favourite garden-terrace, where, at his leisure hours, he was accustomed to work at getting it into order, clearing away the bushes from below, and cultivating the flowers with care. He was sadly and thoughtfully busied at his work, when Mr. Vincent joined him. He had heard the sound of riot as he passed near the hall, and he asked no questions of Ambrose; nor did Ambrose say why he was there alone, or why he was sorrowful. Mr. Vincent knew but too well. But Ambrose did not know the sorrowful news which Mr. Vincent had to announce to him. The aged rector of

Marstone was lately dead; and Sir Francis, in order to rid himself of the watchful eye from which he shrunk, had given the living to a young clergyman, who was coming at once to reside there, and to fill Mr. Vincent's place.

When Ambrose heard that Mr. Vincent was going to leave Marstone, the tears came into his eyes. Then he said, earnestly, "May I go with you, sir? I can maintain myself by my labour, and I might serve you too."

"If you ask to go with me, Ambrose," said Mr. Vincent, "I cannot refuse you. But if you ask me what you should do, I should give you a different answer."

"I will ask you, sir," said Ambrose, after a short silence, "what would you have me do?"

"I would have you remain here," answered his minister. "Do not think I have decided lightly on advising you to remain in a scene of trial and of temptation. I have thought anxiously and deeply for you. I can but tell you the desire which is earnest in my mind. I can trust you in this post of difficulty; I would not have you leave it. I would have you remain here, to bear the silent witness of example against that which passes here. Only persevere as you have hitherto done. You know not of what good you may be the instrument; you know not whom you may influence. It is not for you to look forward, or to count on doing great things; but go on steadily. 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.' If ever the trial becomes too great—if your heart faints with weariness, or if temptation presses too hard, then come to me. I need not promise

you a welcome. But, Ambrose, if you can, I wish you to remain near your master; I must leave him."

"I will do whatever you bid me," Ambrose answered, with his eyes sadly fixed on the ground. "Only, sir," he added, raising them towards Mr. Vincent, "do not forget to pray for your poor Ambrose, when you are gone away."

Just then the bell began to call to the evening service, and its sound came to both of them with comfort and encouragement. To Ambrose it was the voice of his mother—of the mother who would never forsake him: he could not now sink back into despondency. To the clergyman it spoke of his high and holy duties. He went down to the church, followed by Ambrose; and when they parted, after the service, each spoke in a more cheerful tone than they had done in the garden.

Ambrose obeyed his minister, and stayed. It was long before he could see what good was done by his staying; yet by degrees some little ground was gained. He had less mockery to endure; for, in spite of themselves, his fellow-servants learnt to respect him. He felt that he had some hold upon Ralph, and that though he was now but too wild, without his influence he would be wilder still. But the time came at last, which shewed the importance of his stay. Sir Francis fell dangerously ill; and, in his illness, could bear no attendance but that of the faithful servant, who had never copied the example of his evil ways: he could not bear to see any of the companions of his excesses. Ambrose was with him day and night; and sometimes, during those long

and anxious watchings, he could breathe a few words in his master's ear, which brought back the pure and happy thoughts of early years—a few words of the Church-service, or a verse of a psalm, which he had once learned from his mother. After a time, Ambrose gained his consent to that which he had at first vehemently refused, the attendance of a clergyman. By degrees his illness abated, and he was able to form more deliberate purposes of repentance; but whilst the strength of Sir Francis was gradually restored, that of Ambrose was fast failing. He had caught the fever from his master, and by a strong effort and the fervour of mind which upheld his body, he had still kept his place by his master's bedside; but as the motive for exertion lessened, he gave way, and at last resigned himself to lie down on a sick bed. With a calm and cheerful spirit, he lay down there when he felt that his work was done, and in spite of all the care and solicitude bestowed by those around him, he felt a deep conviction that he should not rise from it again. Mr. Vincent heard of his illness, and came to see him. He found Marstone Hall changed since he left it; all was quiet there now. Sir Francis received him with the humility and contrition of a sincere penitent; and after an interview with him, Mr. Vincent was conducted to the sick bed of Ambrose. He was welcomed by a smile of deep happiness. Ambrose seized his hand, and kissed it. First, he thanked him earnestly for bidding him stay at Marstone, and then, as earnestly, for coming to see him in his sickness. He spoke with ardent gratitude of his master's kindness and care for him: then, being rather exhausted

y speaking, he lay still, silently looking at Mr. Vincent. The minister of the parish readily consented that Ambrose's earliest friend should attend upon him in his sickness, should read and pray by his bedside, and administer to him the holy Communion. It was a peaceful decline. He said little; but listened, with glistening eyes and ardent looks of fixed attention, to every word that came from Mr. Vincent's lips, whilst his clasped hands shewed how fervently he joined in the prayers that were offered up. So day passed after day, till he became too weak to hear more than a few words at a time, or to take much notice of any sound but that of Mr. Vincent's voice, or the church-bells, when they called to morning and evening service. One summer evening, when the service was ended, and Mr. Vincent returned from attending it, he found the room where Ambrose lay more still than usual. The flowers which were, by order of Sir Francis, daily brought to him from his favourite terrace, lay unnoticed on his bed. He did not raise his eyes at the sound of Mr. Vincent's voice. The minister knelt down, and read the prayer for the departing; and when he arose, and pressed the hand which no longer returned his pressure, he knew that the spirit had fled. Sir Francis mourned for his faithful servant, whilst he mourned for his own errors; and Ralph, who had waited tenderly on his cousin during his illness, took to heart the lesson of his death. He occupied Marstone Farm when Simon left it (as he did, not long after); and amongst the few to whom Ambrose was known, he was not soon forgotten. The green mound in the churchyard which marked his grave was not

unnoticed, and roses from the garden-terrace were sometimes to be seen there. And so ended a life, of which quietness and confidence were the strength.

> "He could not trust his melting soul
> But in his Maker's sight."

## DIALOGUE II.

*Ellen.* We have had no time, Rachel, till now to thank you for the story. I wish we knew what Mr. Vincent taught Ambrose, and all that he said to him to make him feel more happy, and to know better what he ought to do.

*Rachel.* I should think it was very like what Mr. Croft says to you. The same things are true now, and the same rules are right now, that were so when Mr. Vincent taught Ambrose. Only you have been learning them ever since you could speak; and, besides your own good mother's care, you have been brought up under the wings of the Church, to be trained by her teaching.

E. How good we ought to be!

R. Good indeed!

*William.* But, cousin, there is another thing I want to ask you about. Is it a bad thing to talk about religion? Is not that

what *good* people do?—quite different people from Richard Herne and Simon.

E. Ay, Rachel, you gave us some rules once about reproving people who do wrong. Now give us some rules about talking religiously.

R. I do not see exactly how any rules can be given for that. I should think you might as soon want rules how often to talk about your father and mother, or how often you should say you loved them.

E. Oh, cousin, we don't want rules for that!

R. No more ought we, I should think, to want rules for talking, as you say, religiously. We want rules for doing our daily business, for praying and reading the Bible. We need to set ourselves times for all these, because they *are* duties: we may do them well or ill; still they are duties to be done, and we cannot be right if we leave them undone. But talking religiously does not seem of itself to be a duty at all; all depends on the occasion for it. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and people who have religion in their heart will find some occasions when they cannot help speaking of it; but it seems a mistake and a confusion to set it to ourselves as a duty.

E. But it is a duty to some people, is it not? To ministers and to parents?

R. Yes, certainly, teaching is a duty to them. I was thinking of people like ourselves.

*Ann.* I think I understand Rachel, Ellen. When you and I are in our room talking at night, or when we get up, and are dressing, we should never think of talking about religion for a set thing. But if we happened to find any thing to say, we should say it, you know; about the sermon, or Mr. Croft's teaching, or any thing we did not understand. Sometimes you may have said to me, "Oh, Ann, was I cross this morning, when mother sent me to clean up the dairy?"—(or any thing else you did not much like doing)—"I really did not mean it; but it is so hard to be always good-tempered when one dislikes a thing;" and then we have talked about being cross, and tried to remember verses in the Bible about one's temper.

E. Yes, Ann, I know; but because we do not always set ourselves to talk about good things on purpose, it does not follow that we ought never to do it.

W. Do not people talk more,—I mean, talk about good things more,—as they grow better?

R. I do not think that would be a rule; I cannot think it is always so. I suppose, if we watched, we should see, that whenever they did talk of any thing serious, it was in an earnest, thoughtful way, as if they thought

still more than they said,—not in an off-hand way of talking, for talking's sake. And perhaps if we watched, and had a right feeling about it ourselves, to make us clear-sighted, we might notice that, even when they were talking of common things, they had a strong recollection, always present to them, of right and wrong. But I do not know that I can explain what I mean exactly.

E. I think I have noticed it in Mrs. Croft. She sometimes looks grave all at once, if she happens to speak of any thing wrong that has been done,—she looks grave and sorry.

R. I know she does.

A. And, you know, there's John. Mr. Turner told mother that Dick Roberts, who works in the garden at Mr. Talbot's, has been more still and steady a great deal since John has worked with him. But I am sure John does not talk about religion much.

E. I suppose it is John's good pattern.

R. Yes, no doubt, and perhaps a few good words here and there. They do more from people who set a good example than a great many good words from people who take no pains to do right themselves. But about talking on such subjects, people are so different, one cannot make rules. When people talk *naturally*, according to their natural dispositions, of course their manner in talking religiously will vary just like their manner of

talking about any thing else. Some people, if they feel a thing very strongly, will hardly speak of it at all, or in very few words, abruptly.

E. Ah, I have seen that in father sometimes.

A. I remember, when uncle William died, father could hardly speak about it,—only he would sit and listen to any thing Mr. Croft said; and he used to seem better when he came out of church.

R. So, people who feel strongly on religious subjects,—who feel, for instance, God's great goodness to them, and their own unworthiness,—may be able to *say* very little about it.

E. So, after all, we cannot judge of people's goodness by their talk.

R. I should think not, or not till we ourselves are good enough, — I mean, single-hearted and clear-sighted enough,—to distinguish what is said in a true and earnest spirit. I think that for ourselves, the great thing is to shun affectation—pretending to be good, I mean, or trying to shew that we are good —and to be careful not to say any thing that does not really come from our hearts. But there are some really good people, who will take up an affected manner of talking, and using words without meaning: they do it from habit and imitation, and perhaps they think it right.

E. So we must not judge other people who seem to talk for effect, but must take great care not to do it ourselves.

R. I suppose that would be a good rule in most matters, to judge ourselves, and not other people. But I think I can find you a description of the way to do others good, in the same book from which I read the rules about reproving others.

"Consider how great a profession, and yet a profession how unconscious and modest, arises from the mere ordinary manner in which any strict Christian lives. Let this thought be a satisfaction to uneasy minds, which fear lest they are not confessing Christ, yet dread to display. Your *life* displays Christ without intending it. Your *words and deeds* will shew, in the long-run (as it is said), where your treasure is, and your heart. Out of the abundance of your heart your mouth speaketh words 'seasoned with salt.' How do our good deeds excite others to rivalry in a good cause, as the angels perceive, though we do not! . . . . Be we high or low, in our place we can serve, and in consequence glorify, Him who died for us. 'A little maid,' who was 'brought away captive out of the land of Israel, and waited on Naaman's wife,' pointed out to the great captain of the host of the king of Syria the means of recovery from his leprosy; and his servants spoke good words to

ı afterwards, and brought him back to his son, when he would have rejected the mode cure which the prophet prescribed. This y quiet impatient minds, and console the r-scrupulous conscience. 'Wait on God, l be doing good,' and you must, you can- but be shewing your light before men, a city set on a hill.'"

## DIALOGUE III.

*Mrs. Randall.* Rachel, could I speak to you? I do not well know what to do. I have had an offer of a place for Ann—a very good place. But she must go next week, and it puts me in such a fluster! If I sit down quietly, and talk it over with you, I think you can advise me.

*Rachel.* Where is the place?

Mrs. R. With Mrs. Wilmot, who is on a visit to her sister at the Court. She is going home next week, and wishes to take a nur-

sery maid with her. It is fifty miles off. Her maid, who was once my fellow-servant, came over just now to inquire about Ann, and to offer to take her for Mrs. Wilmot. If I agree, she is to go over to-morrow. As she is strong, the lady would not mind her being young. The wages are good; and she might rise to be maid to the young ladies, if she does well. I have spoken to Randall, and he makes no difficulty, but says, "Let her go, to be sure. Cannot you get her ready?"

R. I should think you hardly could.

Mrs. R. As to her clothes, perhaps we might, with working hard; for you know we have got pretty forward. But it takes me so by surprise; and I do not know what to settle for the child's good.

R. Can you make out what sort of family it is?

Mrs. R. I should think they were regular people; but it is a large family, and they have a great deal of company, and go to London every year. She would take her turn to go to church. I asked that, for sometimes in the nursery they are so confined.

R. It is not just the place you had thought of for her. It is in some respects a better one, that is, as to comforts and worldly prospects. But I do not see that you are obliged to accept the offer, if your mind goes against it.

Mrs. R. It does seem a long way to send

her from me at first. And then, you know, the confirmation—she would miss that.

R. Oh, yes. I did not like to mention it at first; but it struck me at once that you would feel that a reason against her going.

Mrs. R. Well, then, I *was* right! Randall would not allow it. He said there might be a confirmation where she was going, and there might be as good a clergyman as ours. Still, said I, there might *not*.

R. And there might be no confirmation for one, two, or three years. And, supposing there were as much pains taken with the young people as there is here, could she profit by it?

Mrs. R. No, to be sure; she could not be spared for an hour every day, as I can spare her; to say nothing of the questions and texts Mr. Croft sets her, that she may write them at home. And then she reads with you that book he gave her: I can manage to give her time.

R. It is a great matter that so very solemn a time in a girl's life should be approached thoughtfully and seriously, and with a mind undisturbed. How different it would be, if her head was full of new duties, and new faces, and perhaps trials! She could not give herself up to it as she can at home. I do not mean that servants cannot prepare themselves *to* be confirmed; but such leisure as Ann has

now, seems a blessing that should not be thrown away.

Mrs. R. Well, it is a great relief to my mind to have your opinion. As Randall leaves it to me, I think I will give it up, even if it should be making a sacrifice.

R. I must say, my dear cousin, I think it would be acting up to your principles if you did. If you give up something of worldly good for your girl, you are putting first what is more important.

Mrs. R. She certainly is quite old enough to be confirmed, and therefore one should not put it off.

R. You know Mr. Croft wishes her to receive the Sacrament the Sunday after.

Mrs. R. Yes; she told me so. She is very anxious to do it, though she seems to feel it a very solemn thing.

R. I hope she will never lose that feeling, but will all her life feel how awful that Holy Sacrament is, and at the same time how necessary to us. And believing, as we do, that unspeakable blessings are in it granted to us —grace, and strength, and sanctification—it could hardly be right to keep her longer without them, or to send her out into the world less guarded and strengthened than she might be.

Mrs. R. Surely that must be true. But many people would not see it all in that way.

And some cannot afford to consider such things; they must get their children out when occasion serves.

R. No doubt, if there is real necessity, the means will be provided for them. But as you *can* choose, and are not obliged to part with your girl directly, I certainly think you should consider things spiritual before things temporal; and perhaps a humbler place may prove a safer one.

Mrs. R. Well, I will send my answer by John to-morrow; and, Rachel, will you write the letter? You know I am but a poor scholar.

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[*Rachel and Ann at work.*]

*Ann.* Yes, cousin, yes; I understand all your reasons, but still I am *very* sorry; I am so fond of children. You know I nursed Jane entirely, and dressed her every day from the time she was three months old. And I should have had such good wages in Mrs. Wilmot's nursery.

*Rachel.* But, my dear, what is the use of fancying what you would have done, when the thing cannot be?

A. I should not have minded, if I had heard nothing about it till it was given up. But when I met Mrs. Jenkins, she seemed to

make sure that I should go; and I got her to tell me all about the place and the children. And all the way as I went home, I thought it over, and quite settled it in my head; and while mother was up with you, I could not attend to my work for thinking of it. It does seem hard.

R. Oh! Ann, how often have I heard you blame other girls for being independent, and for not submitting to be guided! How well you know that there must be disappointment in life; and yet the first that comes oversets you.

A. But it is so *very* tiresome! I should not have minded, if it had not been just that place. Rachel, you look grave at me. No; I ought not to say that. I know I ought to care much more about the confirmation and the teaching: but just now—I must speak the truth—I do care more about the place. And I think I might just have been asked before it was quite given up.

R. And if you had been asked, if you had been allowed to judge for yourself, you would certainly have decided wrong.

A. Why are you sure of that?

R. Because you are taking the wrong side now.

A. Perhaps if I had thought for myself, I might have done right.

R. You would, any how, have had a great

struggle and perplexity. Oh! Ann, never wish for the burden of having to choose your own path! If it is laid on you, seek for help in your difficulties, and it will not be wanting. But be thankful that you are now under authority and guidance, with nothing to do but to resign your own will.

A. "Nothing but!" What can be harder?

R. Hard as it is at first, the sooner we learn it the better; for is not that what we are sent into this world for?

A. But some time or other I must be forced to choose for myself.

R. The things that happen to us all through our lives are usually so ordered, that we have little opportunity to choose at all; and well for us that it is so. "It is easier, and safer, and more pleasant to live in obedience than to live at our own disposing."

## DIALOGUE IV.

[*Ann and Ellen.*]

*Ellen.* How nice it is to have you at home again! But the time is so short: to-morrow you must go.

*Ann.* But I am making the most of my time; for I have been telling father and mother every thing I do, and all about my mistress and her ways; and I have heard every thing that has happened at home since I went.

E. I *am* sorry you could not come in time for the consecration of the new church.

A. I did wish that, having seen it when it was building, and all; but it is no use lamenting. Mistress would have spared me, but the coach did not go yesterday.

E. When I heard it coming, I had been telling mother and Willy all about the bishop and the church. But seeing you put it all out of my head for the moment; and, to say the truth, Ann—

A. You thought I should grudge not having gone. I believe that was the reason you did not say more about it last night. If I *am* sorry for myself, I am glad for you. So now, tell me all about it. But, instead of sitting here with your work, Rachel says you can bring it into her room. Let me have some too, and lend me a thimble. Poor Rachel is going to stay quiet a bit; she is so tired with her long walk yesterday. And you must tell me every thing from beginning to end; for I have heard nothing yet.

E. I am ready enough, to be sure; for my head keeps running upon it all. And, besides,

I want to ask Rachel about several things that I could not make out, and which she must have heard from her friend Mrs. Marshall. There is plenty of work for you, and your own old thimble.

A. Oh, just tell me, before we go up, who Mrs. Marshall is; for I don't like asking before Rachel about people whom she used to know when she was a girl, on account of her brother, and making her sad by setting her to think of old times.

E. Why, Mrs. Marshall was maid to Mr. Talbot's wife, who died in India. She had lived with her before she married, and would not leave her, but went out to India with them, and nursed the two children they lost there. And when Mr. Talbot came home, she came too, and he put her into a nice little cottage close by the new church. Don't you remember the porch, all covered with dark red roses, the day we went there with John? Well, there she lives. Mr. Talbot allows her so much a year, and she does plain work and washing. She has one boy of her own; and, besides that, a niece lives with her—Jane Peters: her husband is dead. But come along.

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A. Well, Rachel, here we are, work and all; and if you don't mind our talking, we shall be very happy here with you.

R. No, my dears, I shall like to hear over

again the history of such a day as yesterday; and as long as I sit still, I feel very well.

E. I suppose I must begin with the first thing in the day. Well, I got up before daylight, to get forward with my work in the house. I thought of you, Ann—how sharp you would have been about it all; and I tried not to forget any thing, that mother might not be put out. It seemed so odd to be cleaning myself before nine o'clock! But we had to set out then, to get to Mrs. Marshall's in good time—for all that you shall hear presently. Well, I put on all my Sunday clothes, and Rachel too, and away we went. It was a misty sort of morning, and I thought rather dull for such an occasion; but it was just such a one as Rachel loves, and she would not let me complain of it. Just as we got to the top of the hill, and out upon the down, the church came in sight. Do you remember how pretty it looked when half-finished? and now it is the most beautiful thing I ever saw. However, we could not stop long to look at it, we were so afraid of being too late. And just as we turned into the lane where Mrs. Marshall's cottage is, the bells began chiming. I could not help running on, though when I got to the gate I stopped for Rachel, and she took me in. I ought to have said that, just before, Tom Marshall passed us, running as hard as he could; and all I saw was, that he had an

odd sort of cap on his head, instead of his hat.

A. What was that for?

E. Don't be in a hurry: you shall hear. Mrs. Marshall was very kind, and asked if I had breakfasted. I was very glad to think I had, for I saw there was no time for such things then; and so was she, she said; for if I did not mind it, I was to go off that very minute with Jane, to meet the new school-mistress and all the school-girls at the end of the lane.

A. What, is there a school there now? What a good thing for Betsy Jones's little sister, who never got a bit of teaching any where!

E. Yes; Mr. Lewis has built a school, and it was opened yesterday. He had appointed all the children that were to belong to it to meet him an hour before church-time. Jane walked with the girls, and I went by the side of the mistress, who told me to stay by her. Such a nice school-room as it is, Ann! not very large, but high, and light, and clean, and the walls pretty well covered with pictures of cathedrals and churches. As soon as we got there, the girls were made to stand in rows down the sides of the room. I put myself out of the way as much as I could; and before long, Mr. Lewis came in with his gown and hood on. He looked very kind, and very

much pleased, as he spoke to Mrs. Tho son, and then to several of the girls, and how glad he was to see so many there on happy day, all of whom would be at the secration of their church, to which they w be able afterwards to go regularly every with their mistress. Then he talked to t about the bishop and the consecration, how solemn a thing it was, and what h children they were to get a bishop's bles He asked if any of them had ever seen shop. Only two or three had, and then in church. Oh, I forgot that before all he made them repeat the collect for the —St. Matthew's day, you know—and a them a few questions about it. And they repeated a hymn about the consecr of a church. Jane told me afterwards, i out of a book full of hymns that used sung by the early Christians.

A. Did not Mr. Lewis wonder at se you, Ellen? He must have known you not belong to his parish.

R. Mr. Lewis's leave had been aske Ellen to join the school-girls, and to sit them in church. Mrs. Marshall man that for her, thinking she would like t with Jane, who was over here a week or back helping with the washing, and made great friends with her.

E. He seemed to know all about

Rachel; for he told me he had just seen you at Mrs. Marshall's, before he came to the school, and that he was glad to see you looking pretty well, and that any relation of yours was always welcome.

R. I used to see him and his brother very often, when they were boys. That was when I first knew Mrs. Marshall, when she and I were both younger than we are now.

E. I think I never saw any body with such a kind, bright look about him. To be sure, it was nothing then to what it was afterwards in church. Well, he said they ought now to walk to the church; for he wished every one to be early in their places, that there might be no stirring about and confusion when the bishop came. He had no objection to my going alongside of Jane; which I was very glad of, as I could ask her some things I wanted to know as we went.

A. How far had you to walk?

E. About a quarter of a mile. Then Jane told me about the boys singing in church, which we had heard so much of, and about all the pains Mr. Lewis had taken with them, and how anxious he was for them to chant the psalms as well as possible. Her cousin Tom was one of the choir, she said; and he liked learning the chanting of all things, and was very eager about it. All the boys

were to have surplices and caps, like singing boys at a cathedral, she said. They did not like the notion at first, for fear of being laughed at. But Mr. Lewis had explained all about it, and there were very few indeed who minded it now. The bells kept on ringing so merrily all the time we were walking to church.

R. And the larks were singing, as if they were glad too. All the people we saw going towards the church looked happy.

E. Oh dear, it was as pleasant a walk as ever I had in my life, only it was soon over. But then going into church was better still. Mrs. Thompson shewed the two biggest girls the places where we were to be; so they went in first, and we all followed, two and two, and Mrs. Thompson last. Just within the porch Mr. Talbot was standing with a heap of the consecration-books in his hand, one of which he gave to every person that came in.

A. What do you mean by a consecration-book?

E. Oh, have not you seen mine yet? It has the prayers in it that are said by the bishop, and all the directions about the service. There is Rachel's on the table; but you can look at it afterwards. I could not help thinking how glad Mr. Talbot must be to see his church finished and opened, and I looked at

him when I curtsied to him. He looked graver than I expected; perhaps he was thinking of his wife whom he has lost.

A. Mr. Lewis is her brother, is not he?

E. Yes; and they say he is a person who will do so much good in the parish.

A. Whereabouts were you in the church, Ellen?

E. In the two front benches in the south transept. I have not forgotten all we were told about the names of the different parts of the church. It was a very good place; for we could see all up the chancel, and the east window, as well as down the body of the church to the font besides. I do hope, Ann, you will see the inside of the church, now it is finished. I could not take my eyes off the chancel. There is such fine coloured glass in the great east windows, and figures in it of the four evangelists, I believe, and curious patterns all round them. Then the altar is of carved stone, and all the communion-plate is gold, and there are two gold candlesticks. There are steps to go up to it; and as it stands high, you see it the first thing as you come into the church.

R. It was beautiful when the sun came out, and shone bright across the chancel in at the side-windows, which are coloured too.

E. And all the colours could be seen quite plain on the stone floor. The sun began to

shine just when the bishop came out of the vestry; but I have not got to that time yet. There was a nosegay of flowers at the back of the altar, and it looked very pretty. A good many people were in the church when we got there, gentlefolks and poor people too. All the seats are alike,—open benches, of dark wood, with a place to kneel on, in front of each. There are different seats in the chancel; *stalls*, Rachel says, they are called. They go the different way—lengthways, instead of across; and there is a division between every seat. They looked very handsome, because they are carved to match the desk on which the Bible is put, and the other low one where the litany is chanted. Soon after we had taken our places, all the singing boys, in their surplices, came out of the vestry, and went down the side-aisle, out at the door of the church. I knew, because Jane had told me, that they were all to stand in the churchyard, near the gate, and after the bishop had passed through, they were to chant the 96th Psalm, as they walked back to the church in procession. Directly after them came a number of clergymen, Mr. Lewis and his brother (who is also a clergyman), our Mr. Croft, and two more, in their surplices, and many others in their gowns. They were going to meet the bishop at the church-door, and in two or three minutes we saw him come

in, and all the clergymen following him. He went into the vestry to put on his robes, and then I heard the voices outside chanting. I could not hear it very plain, but it sounded very beautiful. The boys then came in, and took their places on each side of the chancel. Mr. Lewis and his brother were in the end stalls, and the rest of the clergymen in the others, except two, who went within the altar-rails with the bishop. Before the service began, there were a great many papers read, and the bishop signed some of them. I could not make out much of what was read, but I kept looking at the bishop all the time. Then he and all the clergymen walked down the middle-aisle, repeating the 24th Psalm; and then they went back to their places, and the bishop repeated all the prayers you will see in the book, which come before morning service begins: they make one think a little how holy churches are.

A. Did the bishop read all the service?

E, Oh, no; only some prayers on purpose for the occasion. There is one after the collect for the day—

R. That collect seemed so suitable, on account of Mr. Talbot having spent so much money on the church.

E. I am sure *he* can have "no covetous desires," or "inordinate love of riches." Oh, and then such a beautiful prayer comes in,

before the prayer of St. Chrysostom, for t
who have had the church built. Do rea
Ann, and think of Mr. Talbot. Did no
boys chant nicely, Rachel?

R. Indeed I thought they did, as far
could judge; and I particularly noticed
well and attentively they behaved the w
time.

E. There were proper psalms and less
as you may suppose. Jane said the li
was chanted as it is in a cathedral. Both
Mr. Lewis's left their stalls, and knelt,
by side, at that low desk which stands
at the beginning of the chancel, and
chanted it. I should not have known i
be chanting, because it is not like a tun
the psalm-chants are; but Jane, and Ra
too, said it was another kind of chant.
could hardly make out if there was more
one voice, they said the words so exactly
gether. Mr. Croft read the lessons, the bi
the beginning of the communion-service;
he preached the sermon too. Oh, dea
have forgotten the text.

R. The 15th verse of the 72d Psalm: '
shall live; and unto Him shall be given o
gold of Arabia. Prayer shall be made
unto Him; and daily shall He be praised

E. I could not hear the sermon very pl
but it was about the blessing of having
church built in a part of the parish w

one had been so long wanted, and where the people would now have the opportunity of praying to God, and praising Him in His temple day by day.

R. Mr. Lewis had given notice that there would be service twice every day. I think there are some people who will be very glad of that. Did you attend to what the bishop said about the danger of neglecting so great a privilege; and how, if we are careless about attending church whenever we can, our carelessness will appear against us hereafter to our condemnation?

E. It was a short sermon; and then the bishop went back to the altar, and one of the clergymen began reading the offertory, and several others carried the plates about the church.

A. To collect money?

E. Yes, for the church; and when they came to our bench, they were going to pass by. I suppose they thought that children had nothing to give; but three or four girls put out their hands with halfpence they had brought, and I put a sixpence into the plate. There was a great deal of gold in it, and bank-notes. I thought it was very nice to put in a sixpence, because it was like the widow's mite, and—

R. Ellen, you have got an odd notion in your head about the widow's mite, if you

think that any small piece of money, given as yours was, is like it: for you seem to take credit to yourself for having given that sixpence; but was it *really* a sacrifice you made in giving it?

E. No, I can't say that. Mother gave it me on purpose to put into the plate.

R. Then, what reason had you for comparing it to the widow's mite? It was not because she cast two mites, which make a farthing, into the treasury of the temple, that our Lord commended her; but because it was all her living, "all that she had." Now, for any thing you know, that gold which you saw in the plate may not have been given without some great sacrifice being made. Try to remember, my dear Ellen, that it is not the offering a larger or smaller sum which in itself is doing a right action; it is the denying ourselves, in order to offer something for the service of God, which is acceptable in His sight.

E. I suppose it was wrong; yes, I know it was. I was vain of giving what did not really belong to me. [*She sits silent.*]

R. And now you feel ashamed of it. I dare say you will take care another time. I did not mean to stop you, only just to warn you. Go on telling Ann what happened next.

E. I have forgot where I left off.

A. What did they do with the money?

E. Oh, I remember. It was all laid on the altar. The prayer for the church militant was read, and then the bishop gave the blessing. Then we got up, and all the other children, and some grown people, and went out as quietly as we could, while all the rest remained for the Holy Communion.

A. Did you see the bishop again?

E. Yes, some of us. Jane asked if I would walk backward and forward on the down, till the service was over, and the bishop came out to consecrate the churchyard; and so we did. He and all the clergymen came out; and there was a psalm repeated by them, like the first one in church, and then some prayers. Then the bishop went away in his carriage.

A. And you and Rachel went home?

E. We went back to Mrs. Marshall's, till afternoon service. I went again with the school, as I did in the morning. I should not have minded staying with them all the rest of the day; for they were going to have a great tea-drinking, and Mr. Lewis and Mr. Talbot were to be at it; and there were to be all sorts of games afterwards. But you know I could not stay any how; so we came straight home from church, and Mrs. Marshall walked part of the way with us. And so, Ann, that was the end of the day.

A. Well, I should like to go once in my

life to a consecration. I should like to see the bishop again: I did the other day, when I was confirmed, you know.

E. I am sure I should like to go to one every day, or once a week at least. It is all so beautiful, so much better than common church-days. I don't know how it was, but I felt quite different. I could not think of any thing else the whole time; and as to talking or fidgeting, I don't suppose the least of the school-children would have done it for a moment. I wish bishops were always at church. I wish churches were consecrated over and over again every year. I wish—

R. My dear child, you had better stop with your wishes. Don't you see you are getting to say very silly things, and wrong things too? You should mind not to get a trick of running on in that way, saying every thing that comes into your head, without considering what it means. But I need not tell you what was one of the silly things you said; for I see by your face that you have recollected it yourself.

E. Oh, Rachel, I know! To be sure, it is very wrong only to be kept quiet in church by the bishop's being there, or to feel the church more holy because he is in it; but yet, he makes it holy by coming. Does not consecrating mean that?

R. When once a bishop has consecrated a

church, that is, has repeated the psalm, and said the prayers appointed for the office of consecration,—we know that God is pleased to be more immediately present in that church, and therefore the building becomes sacred. The bishop goes away after he has, by God's appointment, brought that blessing; but the Presence of God does not go away so long as the church is kept holy—is not profaned by any common or irreverent use being made of it. You remember the verses you looked out in the first book of Kings.* If you had been asked, Ellen, why churches are holy places, I think you would have answered right. But you were talking thoughtlessly.

E. I think I do understand more clearly now.

A. I suppose something like that might be said about ordination?

R. Yes, I suppose so. But, before you go, I wanted to say one thing more to Ellen, while it is fresh in our minds. You said you felt yesterday's service so much more than that of what you call common church-days: I suppose that feeling was owing to the excitement and novelty of it all.

E. I don't quite understand what you mean.

R. Why, that what was so new and uncommon stirred you up. But it cannot be

* 1 Kings viii. 10, 11, and ix. 3.

meant that we should *depend* upon things that are new and uncommon; it is not from such things that we can gain our daily Christian life—our Christian growth. Such events as a consecration may be given us now and then, to stir us up, to give us a new start. But they would do us harm instead of good, if they made us discontented with our common course. The bishop comes once to consecrate the church; the blessing remains there always.

E. I believe I understand that now. I know I was speaking foolishly. It is like my being more pleased to see Ann when she comes home for a holyday; and yet I am sure I should be glad enough to have her living always at home, as she used to do; though, when she did, I do not suppose I thought so much of it.

R. No; things that happen seldom, do strike us more than those which come every day. But our trial is in every-day things. Common church-days are what we have for our food for the greatest part of the year; for not only is it seldom that we can be at such a ceremony as a consecration, but the number of high festivals is very small.

A. Yes; only three in the Christian year—Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.

R. But we must keep a thankful memory of the great events belonging to them. We

must worship and praise God steadily, day by day and week by week—on common days and weeks, as you call them, Ellen.

A. That is like what Mr. Croft said in a sermon on the first Sunday after Trinity, about quiet times and common seasons, when the great festivals are over; and what he told me, too, after I was confirmed—how, as I had before been looking forward to it, so now I should keep looking back and thinking of it.

R. I remember his telling you that, and not to be satisfied with having felt how solemn and awful a thing confirmation is at the time, but to keep up those feelings afterwards, and above all, to *act* upon them. It would be strange indeed, if we did not feel rightly at that very moment when the bishop, the successor of the apostles, lays his hands on our heads. But the thing is, to think every day of all we have engaged to take upon ourselves, and of the grace then given us, and how much we shall have to answer for, if, by our careless lives, we make it useless to us. But your mother will be wanting to see you, Ann, and your time at home is but short. We will all go down to her.

## DIALOGUE V.

[*Ellen and Rachel talking at their work.*]

*Ellen.* There has been nothing particular in the Church-service lately. I mean, nothing suited to the season.

*Rachel.* No; during half the year we celebrate no great event in the Gospel-history. We are left to dwell upon Christian duties, and to learn the lessons of the Gospel.

E. Winter belongs to Christmas, and spring belongs to Easter, and summer to Whitsuntide. I wish there was any thing particular for autumn,—I am so fond of autumn; and I never knew such a beautiful autumn as this.

R. I think it may teach us some lessons, if we will but look for them. God gives us the different seasons; and we should look on all their sights and sounds as ordered by Him. The leaves falling—that must remind us of something.

E. You mean of death; of one friend dropping off after another. But how sad that is to think of!

R. It is sad; it will be sad, if we live long enough to lose many. But God, who makes the season of decay in nature so beautiful,

gives comfort and blessing in sickness and sorrow. You cannot think, Ellen, unless you had seen it, as I have, what a holy and comforting thing a Christian's deathbed may be—how much joy there is in that grief. (*They are silent for a time; then Rachel says*), How long the leaves have kept on this year!

E. Yes; they have changed their colour for more than a fortnight. But it is so warm, that they seem as though they could not fall off.

R. Might not that remind us of the Christian whose work is done here, and who only waits his Master's summons; ready to depart, yet contented to stay; growing nearer and nearer to God every day, and becoming more fit for His presence?

E. I think grandfather was something like that. He lived to be eighty-four, and he was here for three years. He had your room; and he used to sit at the window reading the Bible, and looked so cheerful and kind. I remember him very well; for he used often to take me on his knee, and tell me things out of the Bible.

R. I am sure my dear mistress was such an one too.

E. You say their work was done; but of course God left them here for some good purpose?

R. Of course. And even without see
to know what God has hidden, we may al
the good that such a Christian's example
—the light that their heavenly life seem
throw all round them.

E. And it gives us pleasant thoughts a
death; something like my love for autun

R. You know we ought to have se
thoughts too about death. All the le
must fall at last. When the wind rise
the frosts come, they will drop, till the bo
are quite bare, and not one be left.
then many have already fallen in the bl
of spring and the winds of summer.

E. Yes; I know what that means. Co
is not John very like your brother?

R. Very.

E. And just as good?

R. He has not been so long tried, b
think he will be as true a Christian.

E. Cousin, I sometimes think John wil
young too.

R. You know my dear brother died
an accident, so his likeness to John i
matter; and John seems as strong and h
as any body I know: but all these thing
in God's hands.

E. Now, I will tell you every thing, th
perhaps you may think me foolish; but s
times I feel afraid about mother. I thinl

wears herself out; and when she has a cough and looks ill, it frightens me so. I do not think if mother died that I could bear it.

R. My dear Ellen, you could bear whatever God sent you, if you sought His help. You do not know, till you have tried, either what sorrow is, or what God's comforts are. But I would advise you not to forestall evil. Remember, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Your friends as yet are well. I see nothing to make us uneasy about your dear mother. She does work hard, and therefore you should try to relieve her; but she works briskly and cheerfully. If you live long, Ellen, you must have trials; but they may be very different from what you expect. The way to be happy is, to leave it all in God's hands, who will do what He sees best. It ought not really to signify so very much whether we are sick or well, rich or poor, sad or merry, alone or with friends about us, if only we follow Him, and receive rightly all He sends us. But the thought of our *own* death is always a wholesome thought.

E. I don't think I should mind dying young; but how sad it must be to see one's friends die! [*After a silence.*] I suppose what you have been saying, about not thinking too much of what may happen—taking thought for the morrow—is as true about poverty,—I mean, being afraid of being poor.

R. Certainly. That seems to be the chief meaning of the verse, "Take no thought for the morrow." How many people are tempted to spend their thoughts and time on constant fears and anxieties about their daily living!

E. But is it wrong? They *can* help caring about fine clothes or nice food; but surely, if they have not money to get bread and clothes, they cannot help being anxious and unhappy. It must be so dreadful not to know whether one shall have a morsel to eat or not.

R. It is a great trial; and the poor who are not religious often give way to it. But I have known some who never knew, from one week's end to another, what they were to look to, and yet were contented and happy. They trusted all in God's hands, to do as He thought best, and to bring them through their trouble.

E. I am sure that shames me; for sometimes, when father says how bad times are, and that he does not know how to pay his rent, and feels so afraid that we shall get into distress, I cannot help thinking of it at night.

*Ann* [*who has come in a little before*]. O, I am not afraid. I think good, honest, hard-working people like father always keep out of trouble. And really it is a great comfort that people's living does depend so much on their own good conduct.

R. It does certainly a good deal. But God

brings good people into trouble for His own wise purposes.

A. Yes, I know; but still do not you think, Cousin, that a girl who is determined to do her duty, as I am sure I am, is quite certain of maintaining herself in service, and of laying by something against old age? And does not this make one free from such fears and cares?

R. But, my dear, who ensures you against illness or accident? Who promises you the use of your limbs and senses through your life?

A. O, I did not mean illness, of course; but unless one was ill?

R. If you were not ill, still many chances, as people call them, may arise. I would not call them chances, but God's providences—what He provides for us; such as losses, unkindness, failure of our plans, distress of friends. Did you never think, that if you were ever so healthy and prosperous, you might be called from your service to nurse your parents in sickness, or to give up your earnings to help them in distress? Such things happen every day. We say they happen, but God orders them.

E. And if we thought less of the happening, and more of the ordering, I suppose we should meet them better. But if *our* parents were ill, I hope I should nurse them.

R. I only said that to stop Ann from being

too confident of getting on. I hope you would both do your duty, if the time came, and not choose your own path, but walk steadily in that pointed out to you. You may, perhaps, live to feel that there is rest and comfort even in not seeing your way, and not desiring to see more than one step forward, "casting all your care on Him who careth for you."

E. To be sure, it is wonderful how contented some people are. There is poor Betty Moore, who washes here. Her husband does not get work half his time; and many weeks she has nothing coming in but what she earns here. But she looks cheerful, and never complains. And if you try to make out how she manages, she never will say she is distressed.

R. I would not try to make her say so. I am sure "godliness with contentment is great gain." I always see her at church.

A. Yes. If she is ever so tired Saturday, she will finish up every thing, and mend her clothes and the children's, to be ready for church, and to send the children to school. And when her husband is out of work, and she too, they come to church on week-days. I suppose she is but ignorant.

R. She seems to have got what is better than learning. How do you think they live?

A. She is so honest, that they will trust her at the shop. And she and the children work very hard in harvest, and pay the debts, as

well as the rent. And the poor man is sober and good, though he is not over sharp, they say.

E. I dare say, Cousin, she thinks as you do, though she has not words to say it. When mother asks how they get on, she will say, "O, not very well; but I dare say we shall do better soon, please God."

A. She strives on, and does not mind difficulties. That's an example for us. I am determined to do the same in my place. I will not mind hardships.

R. That is a good resolution, if you only take care not to depend on yourself; and then your determining not to be disheartened or discontented with the first cross or hindrance will make you go on well, as you have begun well. To bear what is sent us, because it comes from God, is like trusting the future in His hands. As we trusted before it came, so we welcome what does come. But we must not keep Ann talking too long, as she is only come home to inquire about the poultry.

A. O yes! mind and keep the chickens for mistress, please; and let me have a nosegay to take back.

E. I will go and gather it.

## DIALOGUE VI.

[*John and Ellen in the garden.*]

*Ellen.* Look, there are still a few flowers left, John. Do tell me the name of this, for I can't think of it. It is something like those flowers in the corn-fields that creep round the stalks of the corn, and any thing that grows by the path-side; some are large and white, and the small ones are pinkish; we call them bindweeds, you know. But I want to remember the name of this pretty blue one that

only grows in gardens—a longer name than bindweed.

*John.* Yes, Mr. Talbot's gardener calls it convolvulus.

E. Such a long name! I like bindweed much better, because I can remember it. But any how, the flower is very pretty. I think my flowers never looked so pretty as they do this year.

J. Much your flowers would grow, Ellen, if I had not looked after them at odd times, and watered them all this summer when you forgot it!

E. I am sure I did water them very often.

J. Yes, when it was not very hot, and you did not think you were too tired.

E. Well, but I watered them sometimes; and I daresay I should oftener, only, you know, I had such a good brother to do it for me!

J. Ah, what is it you are wanting me to do for you now, that you begin flattering me? I will tell you something though, that I want you to do for me. When will you mend my smock-frock that I told you about?

E. You should not talk about mending on Sundays.

J. But you should not neglect your business on week-days.

E. Well, keep to Sunday-talk now, if you please, and don't tease me.

J. For shame, you lazy little Ellen! If Ann had been at home, she would have done it. [*Ellen begins to cry.*] Come, come, don't cry. I am sure that is not a Sunday-thing to do. I was going to ask you something. Don't be afraid; nothing to make you cry; you can answer me without making those sad faces. The flowers put me in mind of it. What did Mr. Croft say to you about the Gospel to-day? I could just hear a little, while I was teaching my class; and I longed so to hear more; only I knew I must keep minding them. Tom Newton takes a good deal of looking after, I can tell you.

E. But Mr. Croft does teach you sometimes, does not he?

J. Oh yes, when I go to him on Saturday evenings with the other teachers. But I was forced to go to Summertown yesterday. Mr. Sutton wanted a parcel fetched; and that hindered my going to Mr. Croft: it does not often happen. Now just tell me what you can remember.

E. Oh, it was very pretty,—all about the flowers and the birds. He told us how we were taught in the Gospel to learn from them, and how the pleasant songs of the birds, and the gay colours of the flowers should put us in mind of our lesson of contentment. He told us, too, how gracious our Lord was to liken us to the flowers with which He has adorned

the earth; what cheerful thoughts that should give us; how we should trust Him to take care of us; and that we ought to strive to have on garments of righteousness, and adorn His kingdom, into which we are adopted. And about the birds, he said, that when we see them flying so gaily in the air, we should look on them as a pattern to us Christians. *They* are happy, because they do not know that they must die. *We* should be happy because we know it; because we have trusted ourselves in God's hands, and therefore we fear no evil. He said a great deal more, that I cannot remember. And when we came home, Rachel shewed me something her mistress once wrote for her—an explanation of the poem for this day in the *Christian Year*. There is a verse at the end too, that she shewed me in the book. I can say it, I think; for Rachel told me to mind them, and remember them when I felt down-hearted, and apt to find out troubles.

J. I should think you had not many troubles, Ellen,—or need not have,—if you get your work done, and please mother.

E. [*thinks and sighs.*] No, I suppose I need not.

J. Why, Ellen, you sigh as if you had all the cares of the family on your shoulders. But come, I don't mean to vex you.

E. I know you are never unkind, John, not

even when you laugh at me. But sometimes I can't help fretting. And sometimes I can't help thinking what may happen.

J. What does Rachel say? She will say what is right. Perhaps I don't; and so I tease you.

E. She says, that if thinking makes me watchful and diligent, it will do me good; but if it makes me fretful and faint-hearted, it only does me harm; it is not the right sort of thinking then. But I'll repeat those lines to you:

> "Live for to-day; to-morrow's light
> To-morrow's cares shall bring to sight;
> Go sleep like closing flowers at night,
> And Heaven thy morn will bless."

J. Those are very pretty lines. I should like you to remember them. I was thinking I should like you to be a nice little flower, Ellen; and look pleasant and smiling, and not fret; and shut up your eyes at night, as the flowers shut up, without any care for the morrow. When one thinks how many good nights' sleep God gives us without any care of our own, that is enough to make one trust Him, and be thankful. I often think, when I am working in the garden, that I ought to be the better for all the lessons the flowers seem to teach; that must be one of them.

E. [*looking at the convolvulus.*] That *flower,* that is not strong, and cannot stand of

itself—it finds something to cling to; now, you would say that is a lesson to me?

J. I suppose it is, if you do but find the right prop.

E. Amy was here the other day; and she made a nosegay of some of the leaves that have changed their colour, and are so bright now. Rachel liked that nosegay so much! She seemed to like it almost better than a flower-nosegay; at least she seemed very much pleased with it. She looked at it a great deal, and said those were colours that would not change again; they had faded all they could before the leaves were gathered.

J. It was so like Rachel to think of that! Some people say the dead leaves are so melancholy. To be sure they give us plenty of trouble sweeping them up; but I do not dislike them for all that. Now you must find, and learn the flower-lessons perfect, will you? or I won't take so much trouble with your garden next year.

*Rachel* [*joining them*]. Ellen, your mother wants you. [*Ellen goes.*]

J. Rachel, can you lend me something Ellen said your mistress had written for you about flowers?

R. I had just been looking over it myself. You are most welcome to read it; and here it is.

## The Flowers of the Field.

How pleasant it is to see the flowers of the field after they have been nursed, like infants, under the soft sky of spring, bathed in warm air, and fed by the dew! and how dear they are to our hearts, as every year we see them return again It is because they were like playfellows to us in our childhood; and as we grow older, it soothes our cares and sorrows to go forth amongst them When we come to our decay, they seem, too, memorials of us.

The flowers are to us all that is left of the happy garden of Eden. They are still as beautiful, as bright, as when they were part of the happiness of paradise. All things else are fallen and changed But the lovely flowers are as perfect as when Eve in her state of innocence, first looked with delight upon them.

The stars in the sky above us are beautiful, but we cannot understand their course; they are high above our thought. But the flowers we can find and touch; and by searching can discover their parts and uses, and admire them more and more.

The birds of the air are beautiful; but since the fall of man, unless they are tamed or imprisoned they flee away from our presence. But the sweet flowers grow by our homes and our paths, though our homes are not free from sorrow, nor our paths from sin. They do not flee from fallen and guilty man; but they are at hand to cheer him; and each day he knows where to find them.

And besides cheering us, how much do they teach

us! We should not despise the silent lessons of the flowers of the field—the lessons which only humble ones can learn. For even the Son of God, who knew all that was in the world, and saw the hearts of all, did not disdain to look upon them, to speak of them, and to teach by them. And if He, their Maker and ours, looked upon them (and when He did so, it must have seemed to renew His first blessing, when He pronounced them good), we ought never to pass them by unheeded. Indeed, few are unwilling to notice their beauty; and many nurse, and watch, and caress them; but how few learn the happy secret their quiet loveliness might teach! "Strive to make the most of to-day—to serve God and to love Him; God himself will provide help for the cares and temptations of to-morrow. Close your eyes in trust and love, as the flowers close their leaves in the evening; and He will bless your morning."

## DIALOGUE VII.

*Rachel.* Ellen, I have been longing so to see you by yourself, to know what makes you unhappy.

*Ellen.* I did not mean you to see. . . But I am so foolish; I never can help shewing when any thing is the matter. Now, to look at my father, you would never have guessed any thing.

R. Perhaps you had rather not be asked.

E. I don't quite know whether I ought to tell you; but you must promise not to tell again.

R. Then I think you had better do without telling me; for it would be rather a foolish thing to promise.

E. [*after a silence.*] I don't think it can be wrong to tell you. The truth is, father is very much distressed about his rent. You know he was unlucky about getting in his barley, and the mead-hay was spoilt; and now the sheep have been ill, and he could not sell them. It was unlucky and tiresome, all coming together.

R. You did not learn that of your father,

my dear Ellen—to call it unlucky and tiresome.

E. No, to be sure; he takes it all patiently, and says we must expect some crosses, and that he thanks God it was no worse. But still, Cousin, there is the rent to pay. And he says he never was behind-hand, and, please God, never will be; and that the squire never raised the rent when times were better, and he will not ask him to lower it now. And then he can't bear going to the dinner at the squire's, and not bringing the whole money. I mean, Rachel, he will get it done somehow, to his own inconvenience; and mother and he are contriving how.

R. I almost wonder they said nothing to me.

E. O, there were two reasons against that: first, for fear you should want to help them; and then, as to living hard.

R. How do you mean?

E. You see, every farthing of money he has must go for rent; and mother always pays as she goes, so we can buy nothing for some time, and every thing must be sold that will help—the fruit, and all the butter. And when she was reckoning up what could be saved, father said, "Rachel has been used to good living, and to fare like a lady. How will she do without fresh meat, and butter, and tea, and all she has been used to? It is all very well

for us to make a shift, but I can't ask her to do it." I don't know how they settled at last, but it does make me unhappy; and I can't think how father makes out to look so cheerful.

R. You seemed almost to give the reason just now. He takes things as they come, without repining; he knows they are sent from God. He does not murmur at his losses, but sets about trying to mend them. Having lived through many a bad season, and many a loss before now, he does not, I suppose, think so much of them as you do, but sets the good against the bad, and is thankful for what is given, and resigned for what is denied. There are many people in your father's station who complain of the weather, and the crops, in a way that does not seem Christian, considering that the Hand of God is in all these things. It does seem a pity that those who are so much among the works of God, and see His wonderful providence in feeding all His creatures, should be discontented at any little cross. How different your father is! he is a pattern for any body.

E. I am afraid I shall never be like him. I shall always be letting things vex me, I know.

R. Now, instead of fretting about this, let us see what each of us can do to help to meet it.

E. How can we help? *We* cannot earn the rent!

R. Is there nothing you can do? No self-denial you can practise? I must let your mother know that you have told me, because I hope I can be of some use. If they will not accept any thing from me, they may let me lend a small sum. And I shall tell her not to think at all of me as to our daily fare. I hope to persuade her that I shall gladly put up with the coarsest. It would be strange if, at my age, I could not learn to do without luxuries.

E. And I will determine to like what is given me, and not be nice, as I know I was on Saturday. And I can sell my beautiful codlins on my two apple-trees, that used to make such apple-tarts. And I'll keep my stuff frock against Christmas, instead of wearing it every Sunday now; and so I shall not want another. And I can turn my bonnet-ribbon, and make that do. Is there any thing else, do you think?

R. Can you take any needle-work? I could put by mine to help you.

E. To be sure, there is some very nice work Mrs. Croft wants done, against the baby is short-coated; she was asking who could do it. She wanted it done very clean; and the school-work is not quite good enough. But

then I could not get it done, unless I sit to it very much. I could never stir out; for, you know, I have a great deal already to do.

R. I don't see why you should not sit to it very much. Your house-work gives you exercise enough; and when you have done that, we will sit and work hard, as long as the light lasts; and candle-light will do for your own mendings. Only ask Mrs. Croft for the work; and, depend upon it, you will find it a cure for fretting.

E. And another thing, Rachel, of course there will be no Michaelmas goose.

R. I hope not, indeed.

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E. Drip, drip, drip! Will it never have done raining? And there I have got to walk to Wood Hall with those tiresome eggs!

R. Where is that?

E. Oh, ever so far beyond the church, out among the beech copses; and such an out-of-the-way place, that nobody will be going that way; and I must take them myself. I don't think mother considered the rain.

R. She most likely thought, that, with a good cloak and umbrella, the rain would not hurt you, and that you had better learn not to mind such things.

E. I have been working hard all day; and

how I should like now to sit down to my needle-work, by this nice bright fire, with you!

R. [*smiling*] "Like to sit down to work!" that is something gained.

E. I really think, if the rain does not stop, I cannot go. I daresay I should not get three halfpence a piece for them. After all, it is no great matter.

R. But where are your resolutions to do whatever you could in the time of distress? Ellen, I thought you were keeping to them.

E. Well, I'll go in a quarter of an hour; it may get better by that. I am sorry, Rachel, you think me wrong. But really every thing goes cross with us just now; and it puts one quite out of heart. There's mother gets no better; and I know the farm-business is not going well at all; and then poor Ann—

R. Ann will meet her troubles well, I am sure; do not fret for her.

E. Oh, but I know she goes through a great deal more than she says. She will not now talk at all about her mistress; so I am sure she has nothing good to tell. It is one of my troubles that I have not got poor Ann to talk to, and that I don't know what she is about. And I had thought this autumn would be so nice; I had fancied it all in my mind.

R. "Man proposes, and God disposes." Dear Ellen, if you would leave off setting your heart so much on things!

E. [*goes to the window and looks ou*
Such a chilly, dismal day! If it had
been one of those beautiful days last we
I should have been thankful for the wa
but I never got out then at all.

R. Ellen, you are in a naughty humc
The best cure for it would be to go direc
and do as you were bid.

E. It is all very well for you to say so,
ting by this nice fire, and nothing to do
to knit. If you had got to go to Wood Hal

R. I daresay, my dear, I do seem lazy
you; but, to say the truth, the beating
my heart has been so bad to day, that I
forced to sit still.

E. [*coming towards her.*] O dear, I
very sorry; I did not know that. Ha
been bad lately?

R. I am never many days without tha
the headache; but it is not always so bac
to-day. I am afraid I often seem very u
less.

E. Useless! dear Rachel, what shoul
do without you? And there you have b
helping me, and suffering yourself! W
did not you say you were ill?

R. Oh, I would not always be troubl
other people about such things, if I can h
it. I should not have mentioned it now,
*I feared you* would think me unkind. To-d
*as you had* Lucy at home, and there wa

churning, I thought you could do all the work, and that I was of more use to your mother; for she could listen to reading, and she quite enjoyed hearing some psalms and chapters. She said it was one comfort of illness to have so much leisure, and to be able to talk of good things.

E. She never worries herself the least about the work; but then she knows your eye is over us. Well, now I'll go directly; and I beg your pardon, Rachel, I am sure, for speaking as I did. But just tell me first, can nothing be done for this sad complaint?

R. What, of my heart? No, my dear. My mistress had the best advice for me, and I got some relief. But the doctor told me honestly there was no cure; I might live a long while with it, or it might carry me off quite suddenly. It is very good for me to know this. But your bonnet and cloak are on; I won't keep you; I shall be glad to see you back again.

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R. Well, are you very wet?

E. O no, it was so pleasant after all! It rained all the way there, to be sure, and drove in my face; but as I came out of the gate at Wood Hall, there was a long streak of light *under the clouds*, and presently they drew up *like a curtain*, and the sun came out and dried

me. And then every thing looked so pretty and sparkling, with the rain-drops and the sunshine; and before me all the way were great heavy clouds, with the most beautiful colours upon them that you ever saw—all kinds of red, and purple, and gold. I think you might see them still, only they are got quite low.

R. I did see them. Perhaps they were the same clouds that had hung over us all day, and made you so dismal, only drifted away by the wind, and lighted up by the setting sun. Don't you think they are like our earthly troubles, with a light from heaven shining upon them? Sometimes when they are on us we cannot see the good of them; pain and care keep us down, and we can only submit and be patient. But when they are leaving us, we feel that they were sent from God—that they were full of blessings; and we look on them with thankfulness.

E. Well, I hope our troubles of this autumn will drift away, and not without having done me good.

R. And me too, I am sure.

## DIALOGUE VIII.

*Rachel.* I am glad you have left your mother for a little while. I thought she seemed tired with the pleasure of seeing you. She has not recovered her strength yet.

*Ann.* No; I am to go up to see her for a little bit before I go back; I have not more than an hour to stay; for I must be exact to a minute.

*Ellen* [*to Rachel*]. Does not she look so nice and hearty, and so respectable? And are you quite well, Ann?

A. O yes, thank you, very well.

E. And now tell me how you really like it, or how you like your mistress.

A. Well, I told you I liked it very well; but it's not like home, you know.

E. But what sort of a person is your mistress?

A. O she is a very good lady, and takes much pains with me. Master is a very nice old gentleman.

*E. I saw* him tying up his flowers. What

beautiful large hollyhocks he has! And how nice and neat the garden is kept! Do you ever do any thing in it?

A. Sometimes, but master minds it himself mostly.

E. Did you mean that your mistress teaches you like Rachel, or teaches you house-work?

A. Both. She tells me all her ways about the work,—very particular they are; and she hears me read. She does not explain much of it; but I read the psalms and lessons every day, and some lectures on the catechism on Sundays. I ought to be very thankful to her for it, I am sure. And we go in to prayers every morning and evening.

E. How nice—what a good lady she must be! And is she the same about church?

A. O yes, she never misses church; and takes care we should go by turns.

E. Is the house as neat as the garden?

A. O, you never saw any thing so tidy and bright! Not a speck must be seen any where. I have hardly learnt yet to keep it as she likes; what I thought tidiness here was nothing to it.

E. How pretty and pleasant it all sounds! Enough to make one wish to go to service.

A. O Ellen, don't be in a hurry to leave home—you don't know what it is till you try!

*E. I* must go to milking. O dear, do not *be gone* when I come back!

A. No, I shall not, if you are quick. How odd it looks to see you go to milking! I do long to go too: I never touch the milk now.

E. What, you have only the house-work?

A. And waiting and minding the door, and working and mending for mistress, and dressing her. The cook has the dairy.

E. Dear Ann, you should have been cook and dairymaid. It would just have suited you.

A. Yes, but that could not be; and the cook has been there ever so long. But go now, or you will not be back. [*Ellen goes.*] —O Rachel, I wanted so to speak to you! I never could last time. And I would not say a word to mother, for fear of vexing her, now she is ill; and then poor Ellen, if I talked to her about it, she would look so dismal, mother would fancy something was wrong.

R. But what is it? You have managed to keep it quite to yourself.

A. Oh, service is not at all what I expected. I don't think I ever can be happy in service.

R. Don't be disheartened. You know any one may be happy who is doing her duty in her appointed station. What is the matter?

A. I would not talk about it, I am sure, except to you; but mistress is so strict and particular, there is no pleasing her. I would *not mind* any trouble, if she was ever satis-

fied, and if she did not speak so sharp and always twit me with being forgetful, and slovenly, and say it too before others. Now *was* I slovenly or careless at home?

R. I think you remembered things well enough; but then you had not much to remember. And the ways of a small farm-house, like this, are so different from a lady's. And your mistress, though her means are small, is a real lady, and has been used, when young, to live very handsomely. I have heard that it has been only by very good management that she has made what they now have do to live upon. So I was sure you would have new ways to learn; and I thought it would be a good thing for you too.

A. And so I would learn them. But it is not pleasant to be told that all one does is wrong.

R. No, not *pleasant* certainly; but that is not the question.

A. "There is a right way and a wrong way of doing every thing." That is what she keeps repeating; and she means that mine is the wrong way. Now do you think it likely, so well as mother taught me, that I should be always wrong, and have to learn all fresh?

R. Why, if a seam was not sewed *very* neatly, you could not mend it without first unpicking; so perhaps it is better to begin *fresh*. But then, my dear, did you always *follow your* mother exactly, and not like to

have a way of your own? Was she never too indulgent to you in overlooking such things?

A. So you think it is all my fault, then! you don't pity me a bit, Rachel.

R. To be sure I pity you, if your mistress is ill-tempered. That is really a trial. But don't you think it may be partly owing to your having been too satisfied with yourself, and fancying you were more knowing and handy than you really were? And so it vexes you to be corrected. But depend upon it, it is a good thing for a young girl to begin under a strict mistress, who will take the trouble to teach her, and knows how, which many people do not. It may make you a good servant ever after, if you take it rightly, in a meek spirit, not a proud or vexed one.

A. I do assure you, Cousin, I never complain; and I am ready to learn fresh; but then I never seem to give satisfaction.

R. Perhaps you had better not look to that. Try and do your duty the best you can, without seeking praise. But I will tell you, my dear Ann, that I did hear that your mistress likes you. Very likely she may feel kindly about you, even while she scolds you.

A. I should not have thought that. But I hope it may be so. Another thing, too, I wanted to say; but I am afraid you will call me uncharitable. I can't think why such a religious woman, who is always reading good

books, and living strictly, and helping t
poor, should not mend her own temper.
does not seem consistent, all of a piece,
her.

R. I suppose we are none of us consisten
we do not live according to our Christian pr
fession, or make our lives suit our prayer
and then we hurt the souls of others, as w
as our own, by setting a bad example, a
leading careless people to say that religio
practices make us no better. One thing
am sure of, we have no reason to be judgi
others.

A. Then you blame me for speaking abo
mistress?

R. No, I don't wonder that you should op
your heart about it to your nearest friend
Of course you would not gossip and talk abo
it to others. You behaved very well abo
keeping it from your mother, who might fr
about it, now she is ill and low. Very like
your mistress does not know that she speal
sharply; and we do not know how much sl
struggles with her temper. It is difficult
her age to subdue such faults entirely, unle
people have been accustomed to self-contr
when they were young. She knows by h
actions that she is sincere; and I am sure sl
means well by you. And the better you u
*derstand* and come into all her methods, tl
*less there will* be to try you. I daresay af

a while you will be much more comfortable.

A. Then you mean that I must look to staying on with her. Of course mother would not wish me to leave at present; but I thought perhaps in a year's time I might be allowed to change, if I was really uncomfortable.

R. But I hope when the year comes round you will not wish it. It is a serious thing to change. And such a good mistress as she must be in the main, and such a good servant as I hope you will make, ought not to part hastily. It unsettles one's mind so, thinking of change; and it makes one give way to discontent. It is much better to fit ourselves for the lot appointed us, than to try restlessly to alter the lot to suit our fancies.

A. Lot,—yes,—my lot as a farmer's daughter. But you can hardly call one particular place my lot; other people change their places.

R. I meant, that, as every thing that befals us is God's appointment, we may surely consider it as His dispensation that you are at present settled in a safe home, where you may attend to all your religious duties, learn what will fit you for your station in life, and be carefully watched over. And till there is some very strong reason, of which your parents can best judge, I think you should make up your mind *to be content* in it. It is so much safer *and happier to* be at the disposal of others,

than to take our lot into our own hands have often seen the misery of that.

A. Well, I will try to make the best o: I will try to believe that mistress does like

R. And try not to think too much of little sharp word she may say. Keep wel your mind, that you are but young and ir perienced, and perhaps careless sometin and that you may deserve some reproof, may not be the best judge how it should given.—But had you not better go and your mother to bid her good bye; and w Ellen comes back, I will take the milk, she can walk down the lane to see you of

## DIALOGUE IX.

*Ellen.* I am just come in to see you, Rachel, before I go to bed. What are you about? O, how hard you have been working, to have got all those things mended! I wish I had been helping you!

*Rachel.* You were busy down stairs, dear, were you not? Saturday evening is a busy time. But you should be going to bed now. Good night.

E. Let me sit down and talk to you a minute or two, please. You won't stay up much longer, will you, Rachel? It is so bad for you. Let me see how much more you have got to do; may I just stay and help you to finish?

R. No, my dear, I had rather you were in bed.

E. But it is so dreary for you, Rachel, with that hollow wind blowing, and all alone. And you have got no fire up here; and the nights are getting cold now.

R. [*smiling.*] You are determined to make out *troubles* for me. I had not found out *that I was* so much to be pitied in my own

snug room. But you look very sleepy; so go to bed.

E. Rachel, may I touch your Bible—your favourite great Bible, now it is lying open before you? I know whose it was, and why you love it. Can you read whilst you work?

R. I have read the afternoon lessons; and I have left the book open, because then I can look at some of the verses in that fifth chapter of Hebrews, and remind myself of them as I work.

E. I suppose that Bible is company for you, when you sit alone?

R. Yes; and if I love it more for my dear brother's sake, who loved it so much, I hope that is not wrong. We used to read in it together sometimes. We learnt that short lesson for this morning's service (the twelfth chapter of Isaiah) out of it when we were young.

E. It must bring a great many thoughts to your mind. You would not call them sad thoughts?

R. I should be most unthankful if I did. There are many thoughts for to-night, the eve of St. Andrew's day and of Advent Sunday. St. Andrew's day always reminds me of my dear brother: "He first findeth his own brother Peter." Have you read the lines on it in the *Christian Year?*

*E. Yes, those* you shewed me last year.

*R. [repeats them as she works.]*

"First seek thy Saviour out, and dwell
Beneath the shadow of His roof;
Till thou have scann'd His features well,
And known Him for the Christ by proof.

Such proof as they are sure to find
Who spend with Him their happy days;
Clean hands and a self-ruling mind,
Ever in tune for love and praise."

E. I think, Rachel, I can remember the last verses.

"No fading frail memorial give,
To soothe his soul when thou art gone,
But wreaths of hope for aye to live,
And thoughts of good together done.

That so before the judgment-seat,
Though changed and glorified each face,
Not unremember'd ye may meet,
For endless ages to embrace."

R. That is a thought to prepare us for to-morrow—on all sides of us mercies and warnings. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Those words were in yesterday's lesson; and there was a warning in the first verse, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." How much there is to think over in the past year,—the Church's year, with its course of fast and festival! Another is beginning; and to-morrow we shall again hear the summons to put on the armour of light. Every day brings us some new blessing and some new warning.

" Faith's ear, with awful, still delight,
Counts them like minute-bells at night,
Keeping the heart awake till dawn of morn.

E. Hark at that wind again! There will be but few leaves left to-morrow. O Rachel, I hope I shall make better use of next year than I have of this; I hope I shall begin well, and go on well. We have had our warnings lately—all our troubles. O, I hope they have not been wasted on me. But now I will go; only say a verse or two more out of the *Christian Year* to me.

R. Some words are just come into my head, out of a book that is a prose *Christian Year*.

" Year passes after year silently; Christ's coming is ever nearer than it was. O that, as He comes nearer earth, we may approach nearer heaven!"

But if you stop one moment, I will get the book in which my good mistress used to copy things for me, and read you something more.

" Were it not for our unprepared state, as in one sense it may truly be called, how gladly should we hail each new month and year, as a token that ou Saviour is so much nearer to us than He ever ha been yet! May He grant His grace abundantly t us, to make us meet for His presence, that we m not be ashamed before Him at His coming! M He vouchsafe to us the full grace of His or nances! may He feed us with His choicest gif may He extract the poison from our souls! r *He wash us* clean in His precious blood, and *us the fulness* of faith, love, and hope, as

tastes of the heavenly portion which He destines for us."

These are such thoughts as we must keep in mind—such as must chasten even the blessed remembrance of departed friends. Unless we are made fit to meet them again, it is in vain that we dwell upon their memory.

"They have but left our weary ways,
To live in memory here, in heaven by love and praise."

But unless we are striving to overcome the enemies they overcame, we have no right to rejoice in their memory—to share in their praise. We must pray to their Lord and ours, to make us fit for His second coming. We must pray to Him that, being called by His holy word, we may give up ourselves obediently to fulfil His holy commandments.

*Mrs. Randall.* Well, Rachel, I have at last found time to have a little quiet talk with you; that is one of my pleasures in the Christmas holydays. The young ones are gone out on the ice; but the fireside suits us best, I believe.

*Rachel.* I am sure it is one of my Christmas pleasures to see you strong and hearty again. What a walk you have had! and yet you don't seem tired.

Mrs. R. I said I would go myself to the squire's with a couple of fowls. You know what fine ones they are. Not that such a poor gift could signify to them; but I wanted just to shew that I felt his kindness.

R. So he excused Randall all the rent that was still due?

Mrs. R. Every farthing of it. Randall had at last scraped the whole sum together, and went to the squire himself, that he might explain how he came to be behind-hand. So then the squire told him at once he knew how it had all happened, and about the bad crops; and he said he had never been behind before. He liked, he said, to consider such good tenants. Altogether, he spoke so handsomely of him, that poor Randall said he was ashamed to repeat it; and that, if the crops were as bad this next year, he said he should

make a difference. "But," says he, "don't you send all the others to be let off too, Randall. There are some who go on in the old way, neither they nor their wives or daughters making any difference in their expenses, or trying to save even part of what they owe."

R. The squire seems to be a good and kind landlord, and to see into every thing himself. To be sure, he could not excuse them all; he would have nothing for his own family.

Mrs. R. No. He said himself, the tenants were apt to expect it; but they did not consider the expense he was at in bringing up his family, and that, if he parted with his servants and work-people, it would throw them into distress. I have heard he gives a great deal to many great charities that we know nothing of, and for building churches. I know, in the bad times, that they have made a great difference in their own way of living, that they might help others.

R. I am glad of this behaviour of the squire to Randall. It seems to make all smooth.

Mrs. R. Please God, we shall now do well enough, with common carefulness. It is a real happy Christmas, Rachel, every way. How many things we have just now to be thankful for! About Ann—O, I wanted to tell you all that.

R. I am glad you went to fetch her home *yourself for* her holydays. She is to stay *with us over* new-year's day?

Mrs. R. Yes; her master and mistress are gone to their son's, so they can spare her. But it was such a great thing that I found the old lady not yet gone. She had me into the parlour, and made me sit down. Then she told me I should be glad to hear what she had to say about Ann.

R. That is just what I wished to hear.

Mrs. R. Yes. Ann, poor girl, has quite won the old lady's heart by her behaviour during her illness. Ann *is* a good girl; though she is mine, I must say it. Thanks partly to you, Cousin; you have given her the best of advice, and seen that she followed it, when I had no time for watching her. But, as I was saying—

R. Did Ann nurse her mistress chiefly herself?

Mrs. R. That was the thing. She said Ann was always at hand when she was wanted. She said she could not think how she contrived to do all the house-work, and have things comfortable for her master, and yet be always ready to come at her call.

R. It was having a willing mind.

Mrs. R. Ann would not be denied taking her turn to sit up with her at night. And she would sit and read to her regularly, because her voice was stronger than her master's. The old lady wanted her to go out for a little air sometimes; but no, Ann would not hear of it. "I'll wait till you are a little

better, please ma'am," she would say; "you might happen to want something, and Sally might not know where I had put it." And though she had often thought Ann rather noisy at her work, yet now she said she moved about the room like a mouse.

R. What a satisfaction it is that Ann should have done all this so willingly—from her heart, as one may say!

Mrs. R. That's exactly what I thought. And though I could not just say it, I did think of that verse about not doing things "with eye-service, as men-pleasers."

R. I really think that Ann must lately have kept that text in her mind, though it has not been always in her mouth.

Mrs. R. I do hope my girls have such texts always in their minds, and not in their mouths. You have taught them that.

R. They had examples in their own home. But about Ann's mistress. So she quite opened her mind about her?

Mrs. R. Quite; and I may say to you, between ourselves, what the poor old lady told me. I am sure it does her credit. She said, "I am afraid I have often had a sharp way of speaking to the girl. I have had many things to sour my temper, Mrs. Randall; but I don't mean that as an excuse. My life has been mercifully spared a little longer, that I may mend this, and many faults besides."

And then she went on to say how one night, when Ann was sitting up with her, she told her that she knew she had often been unreasonable when Ann was willing, and that she had not made allowances for such a young girl; and she begged her to forgive it. Poor Ann could make no answer but cry, and say she had been a good mistress to her; and she hoped her time here would be much longer; and she would do any thing to serve her.

R. Ah, I should have expected that of Ann.

Mrs. R. And when I named this to Ann, as we came home, I wish you had heard her speak of her mistress, quite as if she loved her. She had told Ann she wished she could afford to make her some return for all her attention, but she could not raise her wages just then, because of all the expense of her illness. And Ann knew that well enough. So, when her mistress said she should like to give her a new gown against Christmas, Ann said, if she pleased, she would have a new Prayer-book, because her own was a good deal worn. She expected a sixpenny one; but her mistress has given her that nice one you saw, with a blue binding and gi leaves, and her name written in it. "A tok of regard from her mistress," or some su words, there are in it; you will see the Her mistress said, if she heard of a be place, she would give her the character

deserved, though she should miss her sadly. I told this to Ann coming home.

R. What did she say to it?

Mrs. R. O, that if I pleased, she would rather stop on there. "For," said she, "now I know mistress's ways, I think she would miss me; and a new girl might think her manner unkind; but I know that is nothing, and how really good she is, and kind too; I am sure she is that to me. I could not think of leaving her, unless you told me to do it."

R. And that satisfied you?

Mrs. R. Oh, to be sure. I am quite glad they should have any body who is really attached to them, to be with them in their old age. And Ann is learning a good deal there, and getting steady ways. Her fellow-servant is a quiet, safe companion for her. And above all, you know her opportunities for her religious duties.

R. Yes; I think we have every thing to be thankful for on her account. And poor dear Ellen; don't you think one may say, she is very much improved? Does it not seem as if all these troubles and difficulties had been in a manner a blessing to her?

Mrs. R. Ay, that's what our John said, when he saw her bustling about one day. "Little Ellen has no time for fretting now; *she has too* much to think of. I shall never *have to* call her a fine lady again."

R. No; and when John laughs and jo
with her, she laughs again, instead of cryi
How pleased she was when John came ho
for Christmas-day, and shewed her the b
Mr. Talbot had given him, and the new s
of clothes!

Mrs. R. John is one of the greatest co
forts we have. And William is a comfort t
now; he has mended as to his fretfulness t
You have helped him about that. I ho
please God, Lucy and Jenny will follow
example of the others. I was telling Ran
about all this yesterday evening. I am sure
feels it all, though it is not his way to
much. But all at once he said, "The
after to-morrow is new-year's day—the C
cumcision; and he *would* go to church to
his prayers, and return thanks for all th
things, come what would to hinder it. A
he hoped, please God, to get more to chu
this year on week-days, even if it was a b
time. He could not but think it would br
a blessing." I said I was sure I was not
woman to hinder him, but to do so too. A
I know, Rachel, that what Randall does s
he will do; for he is no talker.

# CONVERSATIONS

WITH

# COUSIN RACHEL.

PART IV.

LONDON:
JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
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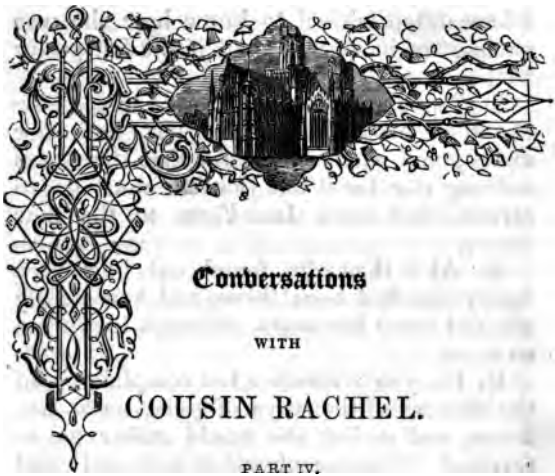


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## DIALOGUE I.

RACHEL. ELLEN.

*Ellen.* Rachel, what do you think William has just been telling me? Amy Yaldon is coming into this neighbourhood again. Mr. Collins, her master, has lately bought Holly Grove, and the family are expected to come into it immediately.

*Rachel.* I shall be very glad to see her again, poor girl, if only for her aunts' sake.

I have often wished to know how she
getting on in service, and if she felt p
well reconciled to it.

E. To be sure, it was grievous to see
she took on after she had lost both
aunts; and when she heard that there
nothing else for it but that she must g
service, and leave Lea Farm to the
comer.

R. Ah! then she found out how
happy she had been there, and how d
she had loved her aunts, although they
so strict.

E. Do you remember her complainin
the dulness of the ways of going on at
Farm, and saying she would rather g
service? *She* remembered it well, and
over it the very last day I saw her.
said how very ungrateful it had been of
and how she would give all she had to b
back the days she once thought dull.
Rachel, I could not help thinking wh
heard her say that, how very thankful I o
to be for my great happiness, and how
it will be when I shall have to look bac
it as gone by; and this *must* happen
live.

R. Of course. But, dear, I do not t
your danger is of unthankfulness for
*present*, but rather of fearfulness for
*future*. As you say, if you live, you

know change; for it is the lot appointed by God for all on earth; but, then, though we shall have *change*, Christians, thank God, have done with *chance*. No change can ever happen to us but by the will of our heavenly Father, and for our good. We should soon take up our rest here, and forget that we are on our journey, if things always went on in the same quiet way with us. Don't you know, Ellen, how the birds flit about from tree to tree, singing cheerily, but never stopping long on the same branch: they only *rest* when they get back to their nest and their young ones. We too may be cheerful and light-hearted, taking thankfully every joy and pleasure which is lent us, but not so setting our hearts on any as to find it hard to give it up at God's *first* call.

E. But there is something so very sad in the thought of change.

R. Change looks sadder, I believe, to those who have not yet known it than to those that have. I suppose none but the *very* good can look upon change with joyful, fearless hearts; but we should all try to do this, as we should all try to be amongst those who are *very* good.

E. To be sure, God Almighty must know what is best for us; and if we pray every day that His will may be done, it must be very

wrong to be sorry for changes which He sends: it is praying one way, and acting another. Well, I am very glad we are going to have poor Amy amongst us again. I hope she will be able to come and see us sometimes. Do you know what sort of lady Mrs. Collins is?

R. Very good and kind, I believe. I am almost sure I used to see her at my mistress's occasionally; that was before she married. But we shall hear all about that from Amy herself when she comes.

---

[*Coming home from Church.*]

E. Yes, dear Amy, we knew that you were come, and we quite thought we should see you to-day.

*Amy*. Oh, Ellen, I can never tell you how happy I am to see you again! It is like the coming back of old times. Not that I am unhappy now; I am sure I am much better off than I deserve; I have a very kind mistress, and a light place. But you are all my old friends, and I knew you when my dear father and aunts were alive, and taking care of me. And then, Cousin Rachel, I have many things I want to tell you about, and to *ask your* advice. I seem now to want so

much help, and I do not feel that I can open my heart to new people as I can to you. My aunts always told me to mind you as I minded them.

R. I know nothing that would please me better than to be of service to you, my dear child.

A. I cannot tell you any thing this afternoon, I have so much to ask about our old acquaintances, and may be I could not think of my difficulties just now; but my mistress is so good, that ever since I was ill in the spring, she has let me go out for a walk in the evening after my work is done. I shall like better coming to you than going any where else; and then when you are not busy, and can listen to me, I will tell you my little troubles. There is one very serious thing, Rachel, I want to talk to you about. You know that I was obliged to go to service the very year I ought to have been confirmed. My mistress says there is to be a Confirmation here this summer, and she has promised to let me go to Mr. Seymour for instruction; but I should like very much if you would talk to me about it too.

R. I doubt being fit for that, Amy. But perhaps if you talk to me about yourself and your usual way of going on, I may sometimes be able to give you a word of advice

that may help you a little in your own private preparation for Confirmation.

A. Thank you, Rachel. Now, dear Ellen, let us walk on fast; I do long to see the old farm-house again, and your mother, and Willie, and Jenny.

## DIALOGUE II.

*Rachel.* Ellen, I see Amy coming up to the gate. Suppose we take our work into the arbour, she will enjoy being there; and the evening is so warm that it will be better for you both to sit still than to walk about.

*Ellen.* Yes; and then you can talk to Amy, and I can listen: I am sure you will say things that will be as useful for me as for her.

---

*Amy.* You see, Rachel, my mistress is very good and thoughtful about our Confirmation; she lends me books, besides letting me go once a week to Mr. Seymour; but for all that, it will be a comfort to talk over things with you. It is such a very serious thing to be confirmed!

R. It is indeed; and a thing to be seriously *thought* of, as well as seriously talked of.

A. And yet, do you know, my fellow-servant Hannah—she is the kitchen-maid—does not trouble her head at all about it; *though she* is as ignorant as may be, having *never been* to school or had any teaching.

I do believe she only thinks of the new gown and bonnet she will have when she goes to be confirmed, and of making merry afterwards with the other young people. I am sure *I* should be ashamed to think no more than she does about such a serious thing as taking a vow in the church, and having the Bishop's blessing.

R. I am sure you *ought* to be ashamed, Amy, if you did not think about it, when your good aunts used to take such pains with you; and now even at service you have time to read, and constant opportunities of going to church: but I do not consider it a sign that you think about being confirmed in the right way, if you are very ready to judge other people.

A. Surely I cannot help seeing how careless Hannah is?

R. Then you must remember what you yourself said about her never having been taught. If she had had all your advantages, perhaps by this time she might have been much better than you; and if any thing leads her, by God's blessing, to more serious thoughts, she may still get before you, by making up for lost time, and improving faster than you do. At all events it is no sign of a Christian spirit to be so ready to make comparisons to your own honour. The right spirit of one who is going to be con

a distrust of the weakness and sin-
f her own nature, and a sincere
ess to God, who offers to strengthen
gh the laying on of the hands of
nt the Bishop: neither this dis-
elf nor this thankfulness to God
with a harsh and proud judgment
ghbour.
sorry now that I said that; I am
think me very proud and uncha-

haps I might, if I had heard no-
you but what you have just said
r Hannah; but as I believe you
ell-meaning good-tempered girl, I
that your saying this shews that
times speak without thinking, and
have not yet such a settled Chris-
acter of meekness and charity as
ep your thoughtless sayings from
ud or unkind.
it is so difficult to speak always

y difficult, especially till you have,
help, that character which I speak
makes even unguarded sayings safe.
w do you mean?
d you ever hear your cousin, Mary
ay an ill-natured thing, or tell a
g story, or boast of herself, or cry
r neighbours?

A. No, never.

R. And did she always speak when she came to Lea Farm, ar afraid of laughing and merriment?

A. Oh no; she often laughed and told me things that made me she seemed so light-hearted and c and she is just the same now.

R. Yes, because she has no burd will, or pride, or envy, to keep h being light-hearted; and so she ca merry as a bird, and in as harı way.

A. It must be a great comfort t she never does feel any of those bac for they are very troublesome, es when one knows they are wrong.

R. We are not at all sure that Ma felt any of these wrong tempers; I few people are so happy as not to fe at all, though some are by nature mo tempered and friendly than others: is only from *natural* good temper tl ple keep from speaking ill of their bours, we cannot depend upon them as if they kept from it on Christian ple; it always might happen that a good-tempered person might be prov say an unkind thing, or might say i *carelessness.*

*A.* And do you think that a rea

Christian can never be provoked or be thoughtless?

R. You know how great a part humility and charity bear in the Christian character; and, therefore, the more we have of that character, the less chance there is of hasty words coming out, which do harm unawares, and betray the mischief within. If we really habitually thought of ourselves and of our neighbours as Christians, do you think we could speak proudly of ourselves, or uncharitably of them?

A. I suppose not, because we are members of Christ, and so are they; and that ought to be enough to keep away boasting and ill will.

R. Quite true, my dear Amy; only think so always.

A. I must try to remember it at the right time.

R. Yes, we must try to remember what we believe, and we must fill our hearts as full as possible with true Christian thoughts and feelings; for if our hearts are filled with these, even our hasty words will be Christian too—"out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

A. It would be very pleasant if one always thought and felt right quite naturally.

E. Oh, would it not!

R. *That* can hardly be till, by God's bless-

ing, we reach that state in which we sh
be freed for ever from temptation and fr
evil. In the mean time, we cannot think a
feel right without taking pains, and this
the business of our lives—to subdue the e
of our own sinful nature, and to cherish t
good seed implanted in us at our Baptism

A. As I remember your saying long a
—to make the seed then planted bear
proper fruit, and to make the white g
ments of Baptism fit close on us.

R. Yes, our work is represented to us
both those figures. And you remember t
St. Peter says, "Be clothed with humilit
If we take pains with ourselves, that clo
ing of humility and holiness, which is
be our wedding-garment, will fit close
us, and become more and more our ow
though to the last we must trust entirely
Him who gave it, that He will enable us
keep it.

A. You think good habits get easier
practice?

R. Certainly; and good thoughts a
feelings follow good actions, as well as
before them. If we act kindly, we shall f
kindly; if we keep from using harsh wor
we shall find our minds become mild a
peaceful. It is not enough for us to s
"*I should* like to be gentle and humbl
*and think* it will come by mere wishing

must come by praying and watching. If we really wish to improve ourselves, we must set about it steadily and patiently.

A. Tell me, please, Rachel, what you think is the right way to begin improving ourselves in meekness.

R. I believe the first point is, to take a true view of our condition and calling as Christians; to consider how we have been redeemed, how much has been done for us, and that, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;" that if our blessed Saviour has said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart"—if "the poor in spirit," "the meek," "the peace-makers," are by Him declared "blessed," we ought ever to bear in mind those sacred words of His. Next, I think we must bring ourselves into training by cherishing this gentle and lowly temper on every occasion, and think none too trifling. You meet with such occasions every day. Whenever a fellow-servant says hastily, "It was all your fault," you feel inclined to answer as hastily, "It was not my fault, but yours," without stopping a minute to consider whose fault it really was.

A. To be sure, I have done that often and often.

R. But we *may* check this—we may keep *ourselves, if* we try, from being hasty, un-

fair, and over-eager to excuse ourselves; it is *possible* to judge fairly between ourselves and our fellow-Christians, and we ought to be always trying to do so. Nobody, I should think, can have examined the thoughts of the heart much without discovering that it costs an effort to judge thus fairly—nobody can have persevered in making this effort without finding it well worth while: even besides our duty as Christians, of which it forms a part, we shall find such ease and quiet of mind follow upon this self-discipline.

A. I suppose humility and charity must go together.

R. Yes, they hang together, and cannot be parted. And, setting aside impatience of temper, which proceeds from natural constitution, or from ill health, or from accidental circumstances of vexation, we shall find that most of the ill will and disagreement that is in the world proceeds from pride, and from every one over-valuing *self*.

A. I was just thinking of what happened to me the other day; though it seemed bu a trifle, yet I think it was a proof of wha you have been saying. The nurse asked m to overlook Nanny, the nursery-maid, at h work, because I had been thoroughly taug *needle-work*, and could direct her; so whi *nurse* was out with the children, I sat do

in the nursery to watch Nanny making a little frock. I would have told her how to do it, but she did not like to be told, and so she did it all wrong.

R. Perhaps you did not tell her in the kindest way.

A. I am afraid I did not; for I expected her to be very much obliged to me for taking the trouble to teach her, and I was provoked at her fancying that she knew before she was taught. So, perhaps I made her more obstinate by telling her again and again that she would find she was all wrong.

R. That is very likely.

A. At last nurse came in, and told Nanny she had done it all wrong, and wondered I had not set her right; and I said she would not mind me, and then nurse scolded her till she cried; and she said afterwards, that I had been very unkind to speak against her when she was blamed, and that I wanted to get her out of her place.

R. Nanny must have been very silly, and certainly shewed a want of humility in not liking to be taught what she did not know; but I think, by your own account, that you might have shewn more kindness and patience, and then you would have had the pleasure of keeping her out of disgrace, and most likely, in the end, she would have been *grateful to* you; not to mention what you

well know, that such quiet acts of forbearance and charity as you had then opportunity for, are pleasing in the sight of God, and are of the number of those things which are done in secret, but shall be rewarded openly. This may seem a serious way of speaking of a trifle; but these are the very small every-day things which make up human life, and by means of which our characters are formed to good, if we use them rightly; or, if we do not use them rightly, we go on getting more and more selfish and careless, and so our characters are formed to evil. It is a great encouragement to make the most of these opportunities, that, whenever we get the better of ourselves, God, in His mercy, gives us a feeling of thankful pleasure for having got the better of ourselves, which we may take as a token of His favour, and go on to try more heartily. But, my dear child, I have talked long enough now; think over these things when you go home.—Have you seen Ellen's clump of roses that she is so proud of?

E. Oh, there are many things I want to shew you, Amy. You need not go home for this hour, need you?

A. Why, Ellen, I *need* not, perhaps; but I think I ought. I will tell you why: it is *what Rachel* has been saying that put it into *my head.* You must know, that sometimes

when my own work is done, I go to help cook to clean up her places. Now, she does not always speak very kindly to me; and I have now and then made her an angry answer, and said it was not my business to do her work. I am afraid I said something of that kind the day before yesterday; so I should like to go home now, and tell her that I am at leisure to help her this evening, and that I am sorry for what I said. That will be a little practice in humility and kindness, will it not?

R. Yes, my dear Amy, it will; and I am glad you thought of it. Only remember not to go to the cook feeling so pleased because you mean to do right, that you will be disappointed if she does not seem as much pleased. I only say this as a caution: you are quite right to go. I will tell you first two verses out of the "Christian Year" about what we have been talking of. It is speaking of the feeling brothers have towards each other, and goes on:—

"So is it with true Christian hearts:
  Their mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
  Of holiest brotherhood.
Oh, might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife
Light'ning the load of daily life!

There is much need; for not as yet
  Are we in shelter or repose;
The holy house is still beset
  With leaguer of stern foes:
Wild thoughts within, bad men without,
All evil spirits round about,
Are banded in unblest device
To spoil love's earthly paradise.

Then draw we nearer, day by day,
  Each to his brethren, all to God:
Let the world take us as she may,
  We must not change our road."

## DIALOGUE III.

RACHEL — AMY — ELLEN.

*Amy.* I have been reading my books, Rachel; and now I want you to give me a little more good advice out of your own head. Have you time now?

*Rachel.* Yes; I have only my needle-work to get on with, and I see you have brought yours with you—that's right.

A. I want to tell you how lucky it was that you reminded me on Monday not to be put out, if cook did not seem pleasant at my offering to help her. She said at first, that she supposed I wanted to get something out of her with my civility. I felt very much provoked, and inclined to tell her I would not do any thing for her; but I resolved to do it, and I set about cleaning up the dishes, thinking all the while how good I was, and how ill she returned my kindness.

R. Poor Amy!

*A. Silly* Amy, you might say—if not worse;

but Amy had got a good wise Rachel to help her. And when I had cleaned a little in this sulky, proud mood, it struck me that I did not feel peaceful and happy, as you said I should feel if I was doing right and getting the better of myself. Then I recollected that I had not really got the better of myself; for though I was doing what I had resolved to do, I was not doing it in a Christian temper: I was neither humble nor charitable. Then I remembered, that if cook suspected me unjustly, it was my own fault, because she had known me cross and uncivil before. If I had not been so, it would not have surprised her to hear me speaking so civilly; and I remembered, too, that she is sometimes tired with all she has to do, and that makes her feel out of humour; while I have no such excuse, for I am strong and healthy.

R. Very true. So you finished your work in a better temper than you began it.

A. Yes; and when I had done, cook thanked me very kindly.

R. So it is, altogether, an encouragement to you to try; and if you persevere in trying, you may do right at last almost without thinking about it. Ellen, just fetch that book off my table, and read the passage that I marked, because I have found it very useful and cheering to myself.

*Ellen reads.* "Whatever of pain or affliction meets us through life, we must take it as a penance imposed by a merciful Father upon erring children, to be borne meekly and thankfully, and as intended to remind us of that infinitely greater punishment, which was our desert by nature, and which Christ bore for us on the cross."

R. Now, this is said of *great* trials, in the first place, but it is also true of little trials; though many people will think it their duty to resign themselves patiently to God's will, when He sends them severe pain and affliction, who do not think of thus bearing "meekly and thankfully" the small vexations which come every day. By not doing so, they lose all the benefit of these daily trials; and may perhaps oblige God, in mercy, to send them harder ones. The little vexations of every day are some of "the bitter herbs," and may be "turned to sweet" if they are taken rightly,—I mean such little things as thwart our wishes, and mortify our vanity. We cannot escape from them; but we may, instead of fretting at them, receive them as God's discipline sent to His children, proportioned to their strength, and meant to bring them into better order. Did it never happen to you to think, "How provoking!" if you made a

blunder in something you expected to do well, and to get praise for?

A. Yes, that has often happened.

R. And that, not as an humble feeling at being less perfect than you had thought, but impatiently, and perhaps ready to defend yourself, and deny that you were mistaken —ready, in fact, to pass over or hide the truth, rather than own yourself wrong.

A. I know that bad feeling quite well: it makes me feel cross with myself and every body else; and if any one speaks to me at the time, ten to one but I make a sharp answer. But how can I help it?

R. Why, you certainly can stop and say to yourself, "I have been wrong; but I will not make it worse by this ill-humour; I will rather think it good for me to be humbled, and take it meekly." Anybody *can* say this, and behave accordingly. It is in our power to obtain meekness, and patience, and evenness of temper, if we watch and pray.

E. Rachel, I wish you would tell Amy that great disappointment you had when you had set your heart on getting things right in your mistress's new house.

A. Oh! please, Rachel, tell me that.

R. It is not much worth the telling; but *you* shall hear it, if you like: it certainly *proved a good* lesson to me.—Soon after I

went to live in Mrs. Andrews' family, my master and mistress were going to change their house, and they sent me before them to arrange the rooms. I liked my place very much, and I wished to be a good servant, and to deserve to be trusted; so I tried my utmost to discharge this business well. I worked hard all day at getting things into order, and even shortened my sleep at night that I might get on the faster; and every thing seemed to be getting on well—the furniture so nicely arranged, that I longed for my master and mistress to come and praise me for what I had done.

A. Was it not right of you to try so hard to please them?

R. Certainly it was; but I am afraid my motive was partly vanity and a wish to gain credit. The family did not arrive so soon as I had expected; and, in the mean time, the walls of the new house began to shew signs of damp. I was obliged to take down all the books and pictures, put every thing in confusion, and begin a fresh cleaning; in the midst of which my master and mistress arrived, and found me, not joyfully and proudly ready to receive them, but puzzled what room to shew them into, and how to get any thing into tolerable order. They were very kind to me, and made the best of things; but instead of praising me, they

could only make excuses for me, and say I was very young to be trusted, and it had been too much for me.

E. No wonder you were vexed.

A. But the damp was not your fault.

R. No; but I might have asked a little more about it before I put the furniture against the walls; I might have found out I was doing things too fast. Well, I had tired myself by my eagerness; and I was so vexed and downcast at the disappointment, that I cried heartily when I was alone. Then it struck me that I had never cried and fretted in that way for any of my real *sins;* and I felt that it must be pride which made me cry and fret, and wish it had not all happened so. When once I had owned this to myself, I got more comfortable, because I began to be more really humble. I found out that I had a great deal of pride and vanity in my heart, which wanted to be brought down; and when I had prayed for help to get rid of them, I felt grateful that this little check had been sent to me—perhaps just in time to keep me from getting worse. And then I cried again; but they were quiet, penitent tears, that lightened my heart and did me good. I got up the next morning, resolved, not to be less diligent, but to be less eager and confident; *and when* my mistress talked to me about *my wanting* experience, I listened meekly,

and promised her to be more careful another time, and consult wiser heads than my own.

A. Thank you, Rachel, for telling me all this: I hope I shall learn wisdom from your experience. I remember the other day that I told little Miss Mary, when she tumbled down, that I knew what would happen if she ran so fast by herself; and I said to her nurse (whilst she was crying at her tumble) that it was a good thing that she had fallen on the grass, though it had made her little hands tingle, because she would be more careful, and less likely to run fast on the stones, where a tumble might really hurt her. Now, I suppose you would advise me to consider my own tumbles, when I blunder or forget, in the same sort of way that I considered little Mary's; and when I go wrong in small things, I should say to myself, "That was sure to happen, when you went on carelessly; let it warn you not to go wrong in greater things." Also I should take it as a warning not to find fault with other people; for I know how I laughed at Miss Mary for telling her little cousin he could not run alone as she could.

R. Yes, we are all very like children in our foolish self-conceit; and we must govern and reprove ourselves as we should children

who were put under our care. As to what we have been saying about vexations caused by our own failings,—that we should "bear them meekly and thankfully,"—it is also true of vexations brought upon us by others, and of such as come in the course of things. They all happen by God's appointment; they all form part of His plan of discipline; they may all be turned to real blessings, if we take them rightly. There are some excellent observations on this in Bishop Wilson's "Private Thoughts for Wednesday."

A. I understand how the best people,—such as good Bishop Wilson,—are also the most patient and gentle and forbearing; it is part of their goodness: but it has sometimes puzzled me to understand how they can be the most humble. I do not mean merely that they keep from pride and haughtiness of behaviour; but we are often told that the best people really think the least of their own merits, and that they are more ready to blame themselves than others. Surely they must know that they are better than their neighbours; and how can they keep themselves humble?

R. Because they have such a habit of thinking of God's perfect law—of Christ's example—of their own calling as Christians—of the great blessings they have received

—of the large returns they ought to make, —that their own infirmities are ever present to them, and they seem to themselves never to have done enough, but to be always falling short of their duty. They judge other people charitably, making every allowance for them, and bearing in mind, that except in the case of persons who are in any way under their care, it is not their business to judge another's servant: "to his own Master he standeth or falleth." Therefore, they "judge nothing before the time;" they only judge their own faults, and these they judge severely. Their strictness to themselves makes them indulgent to others. People who are easily satisfied that they have done enough, who think lightly of their Christian duty, and take small pains to fulfil it, may be proud: not those who see how much has been given them, and how much is required of them,—who know that they are bound to love God with their whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and who, really loving Him, wish to love Him much more, and to offer Him the overflowing services of earnest love. You know how we feel if we really love a person,—how zealously we serve such an one, how willingly we deny ourselves and our own wishes to please our friends, rejoicing in an opportunity of shewing our affection, and how heartily we feel

that we can never do enough. Those who love God best, can least pride themselves on the proofs they give of their love. At the same time, I will not tell you, dear Amy, that in your endeavours to improve yourself, and to advance in your Christian course, you may not be tempted to pride yourself on the steps you have gained. I believe this is a temptation common to beginners—even to sincere ones. We know that our great enemy, the devil, is ever on the watch to tempt us, and suits his snares most cunningly to our characters and situations. He tempts the rich to self-indulgence, and the poor to impatience; he tempts some by bad company and example: you may be sure he will tempt *you* in some way. Now he sees you free from the dangers of wealth and greatness, and from those also of want and extreme poverty, and from those of bad companions and too much liberty; he sees you able to gain an honest livelihood, able to lead a Christian life, and to do your duty in your proper station, if you only take common pains not to throw away your blessings. Of course, he will not leave you to go on undisturbed in the quiet course that is appointed you. His first temptation may perhaps be to carelessness,—to doing right only so far as you are obliged, and not taking any trouble with yourself. Then, if he fails in

this, and finds that, in spite of his attempts to make you negligent, you are yet persevering, keeping a watch over your own heart, using the means of grace diligently, praying, striving, and making progress,—then he may tempt you to be proud and self-confident. But go on; if evil thoughts assault you, humble yourself before God, and ask His help. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Remember that you are bound "to fight manfully under Christ's banner;" and "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world;" for He is in you Who has already overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and Who will enable you to overcome them also.

E. May I take your "Christian Year," Rachel, and shew Amy those lines for All Saints'-day which speak of what comes to faithful Christians after the troubles of this world?

R. Yes, dear, read them aloud; and then Amy must go home, for it is getting late.

E. *reads.*

"On, champions blest, in Jesus' name;
Short be your strife, your triumph full,
Till every heart have caught your flame,
And, lighten'd of the world's misrule,

Ye soar those elder saints to meet,
Gather'd long since at Jesus' feet,
No world of passions to destroy,
Their prayers and struggles past, their task all
praise and joy."

## DIALOGUE IV.

*Amy.* Where's Ellen, cousin Rachel?

*Rachel.* Gone to Farmer Young, with a message from her mother; and to tell the truth, Amy, I am not very sorry she should not be here to see that cross face of yours. What can be the matter with you?

A. Why, matter enough. My mistress called me this morning into the drawing-room, and asked me who did it before breakfast, and who did the room opening out of it; and I told which was my part, and which was Hannah's; and then she said that Hannah's was much the best done. And Hannah overheard her, and has been twitting me with it ever since, saying that, with all my learning, which I am so proud of, she is a better servant than I shall ever be.

R. That depends upon the pains you take, I think; but if Hannah's work is the best done, you have only to try and do yours as well.

A. What, do you think I am to learn of Hannah?

R. Certainly I think so, in what she does better than you.

A. But it is so very provoking.

R. It seems to have provoked you very much; but whether it *need* provoke you, perhaps you will be better able to judge when you have thought about it a little.

A. It is very disagreeable to have Hannah set above me in that way, and praised when I am found fault with. I am sure I took all the pains I could.

R. And I, Amy, am sure you did *not;* for if you had, the room would have been better done, and then you would not have been found fault with.

A. I wish I had done it better, and then I should not have had that vain, foolish Hannah boasting over me. I cannot bear it.

R. Gently, Amy; you are quite forgetting yourself. I can have nothing more to say to you, if you go on in that way; you must get into good humour again as you can.

A. O do not leave me! I want your advice.

R. But will you take it, Amy?

A. Yes, rather than that you should give me up.

R. Well, then, shew your patience by hearing what I am going to say. I wish

of course, as your friend, that you should do your work well, and never deserve any blame; but if you are careless, I am very glad that your mistress should find it out, and reprove you for it; you will be more careful another time; and, besides, you shew plainly enough now that you want to be taken down from your good opinion of yourself.

A. It is Hannah who is so proud of herself. I said nothing to her.

R. Had you any thing to say, just then, to your own advantage, Amy?

A. Why no, not just then;—but if *I* had been praised instead of her, I should never have said the provoking things that she has been saying.

R. I dare say you would have been in a good temper, had you been praised instead of blamed; and very likely your good temper would have shewn itself in behaving kindly to your fellow-servant. I wish to do you justice, Amy; I think it would have been so. But now, instead of considering how you *would* have behaved, if things had happened differently, consider how you ought to have behaved, when things happened as they did. Answer me according to your conscience. When your mistress told you that your work was ill done, what ought you to have answered?

A. That I would try and do it better.

R. What *did* you answer?

A. Nothing.

R. Then, when Hannah triumphed over you, it was provoking, I dare say; but what do you think, you ought to have said to yourself?

A. This is a trial of my temper; I must bear it patiently.

R. And something more you might have said to yourself—"I deserve this for my carelessness—I will bear it meekly and thankfully as my punishment." Remember that when vexations come upon us by our own fault, as yours did, we have no business to take credit for bearing them patiently, but rather should own that we have deserved them. And as to Hannah's reproach to you that you boasted of your learning, is that true?

A. No.

R. Think. Have you never shewn that you were proud of it, or taken upon yourself, or tried to shew off what you know?

A. I do not think I have.

R. But we often believe we have not a fault, merely because we have not been at the pains to look for it. Take more pains to be kind to Hannah, to be modest, and not to *take upon* yourself. She will not like you

for your learning, as she calls it, because she does not value learning; but she will like you for being a kind fellow-servant. Let her see that the religious instruction which you have received, and which is your blessing, makes you better able to bear provocations, more willing to own yourself in the wrong, more ready to do kindnesses, and to forgive injuries—that is the way to win her to think religion a good thing.

A. But I am sure my mistress is religious, in her practice as well as in her knowledge, and yet Hannah does not seem to like her much,—at least she was very angry last Sunday when my mistress would not let her drink tea at her cousin's; she said . . . .

R. Do not repeat what she said, as it was clearly wrong; she probably spoke hastily, being vexed and disappointed, and not recollecting that her mistress refused to let her go for some good reason of course. Perhaps in her place, you would have done the same.

A. Likely enough. I am very sorry now for what I said. I am afraid you will despair of my ever mending, for it was only the other day you talked to me about being humble and gentle, and I agreed to all you said, and promised to practise it; and yet I have been proud and peevish this very morning.

R. And passionate and unreasonable, you *might add.*

A. O Rachel, you will be quite out of patience with me!

R. Why, my dear Amy, I have tried my own patience as much, or more, than you can try it. I have found too much perverseness and weakness of purpose in myself to wonder at you.

A. What can I do to make amends for my folly?

R. Behave to Hannah as if you had quite forgotten the provoking things that she said, and to-morrow morning try to do your work better; and if Hannah says any thing more about it, own that her rooms were better done than yours, and say that you hope to improve.

A. That will be rather hard to own and to say.

R. So much the better. If it gives you pain to own yourself in the wrong, it will make you more careful another time.

A. Well, I will try to follow your advice.

R. And besides, Amy, when you say your prayers, do not forget your fault,—do not pass it over,—do not be satisfied with your general confession of sin. Dwell upon this instance of unchristian temper and pride, so that you may *really* repent. Ask for pardon in Christ's name; ask that you may *know* your sinful heart better, and seek the *help of* God's Spirit more heartily and ear-

nestly. Will you do all this, my dear child? —and after doing it, can you shrink from humbling yourself before a fellow-creature?

A. Indeed I will try, dear Rachel.

R. I have found it very useful to read over often St. Paul's description of charity, 1 Cor. xiii., and to compare my behaviour with it: it must always make one feel how very much one falls short of true charity, or brotherly love; but one may hope to get nearer to it by degrees. And also it is very useful to read part of the chapter before, the 12th, in which Christians are compared to the limbs of a body, our blessed Lord being the Head; and we are reminded how the limbs of a body help each other, and suffer or rejoice together, as members of the Church of Christ ought to do.

A. I will read both those chapters attentively.

R. And now, Amy, that you are more reasonable, I will try to point out to you in what ways I think you may have given offence to Hannah, or at least, how you have not set her such a pattern of Christian conduct as would give her a true idea of the advantages of a religious education. I know from what I heard you saying the other day to Ellen, that you think yourself wiser than Hannah about spending your money: you *think rightly* that your wages are to enable

you in the first place to clothe yourself respectably according to your station, and that what remains should either be laid up against the time when you may want it; or given to your relations, if they are not so well off as yourself; or employed in any little occasional acts of charity to the distressed: certainly these are the right uses of your money; and in thinking them so, you are certainly wiser than poor Hannah, who, I believe, spends all her money in dress, and, as I saw last Sunday, decks herself out in a way that must make her betters despise her and laugh at her, instead of admiring her finery. But shall I tell you, Amy, what I have suspected? You shall set me right, if I have judged you uncharitably: I thought when I heard you wondering aloud at Hannah's folly in dressing so fine, that you were half wishing you could put on her finery. On Sunday, for instance, when you cried out so much at the pink ribbon in her new bonnet, and said that it would wear no time at all,—and a great deal more you said, more than I could listen to then,—had you no wish in your heart to put that bonnet on your own head?

A. (*crying*) You make me feel so ashamed of myself.

R. If you did wish for that smart bonnet, *I reckon it* rather as a piece of childishness *than a serious* fault; it belongs to your age

to fancy smart things, just as you may have longed to put them on your doll when you were a child. But if this childish fancy makes you speak harshly of another person, and influences your opinion of her behaviour, you can hardly expect her to respect you, as being wiser and better than herself.

A. But still, Rachel, I do not wear the smart bonnet, because I know it would not be right.

R. Yes, I know that; and it is a proof of self-control; and most likely in time, perhaps in a short time, you will cease even to wish for finery, and like your simple dress better. But, then, if any little spitefulness in the mean time sharpens your temper against a smart fellow-servant, you cannot expect she will spare you, if she catches you out in any fault.

A. I do hope now that I shall always be humble; I do not think I ever can be proud and self-conceited again.

R. You must not *trust* to that, dear Amy; our wrong dispositions are not got rid of at once. We must go on resisting them. We may be convinced that we have no reason to be proud of ourselves, and yet the proud thoughts may arise again. But let us make the right use of proud thoughts, or angry thoughts, or covetous, or impatient, or fretful, or envious thoughts, or any others that

trouble our peace—let us learn from them our real sinfulness and weakness. People who have committed *great* sins, and are then brought to a sense of their wickedness, cannot help feeling great shame, and self-reproach, and fear; they *feel*, as well as acknowledge in words, that sin is indeed a dreadful thing; they *feel* it, as people recovering from a painful illness feel a horror of the disease from which they have just escaped. And as a sick man turns to the physician who is to cure him, so does the repentant sinner turn to the Physician of his soul. Now it is a blessing beyond our power to measure rightly, if we are kept from falling into *great* sin, into open and scandalous sin—if we are sheltered from such, and kept, in comparison of many others, "innocent from the great offence." But we shall abuse this inestimable blessing to our soul's ruin, if we suffer ourselves to become indifferent to the seeds of sin that are within us; we must not think ourselves safe from that worse disease, nor healthy, whilst others are sick.

A. No, for every time we go to church, we all say that we have "no health in us."

R. Those words are most true, whether we attend to them or not; there is no health *in us, but* there is health in the Holy Spirit, *sent by the* Father and the Son to take up

His abode in our sinful hearts, and to make them holy.

A. That is what we pray for, is it not, when we say, "Cleanse Thou the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit?"

R. Yes; and we must cherish His abode in our hearts. Whatever besetting sin may trouble our peace—whether it is known only to ourselves, or to others also—whether we feel proud, angry, discontented, or careless and without serious thought—whatever it be, let it remind us that we *might* become as bad as the thief or the murderer, and that our only safety is in dependence on our Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; let us never think of sin as trifling, but as more serious than any thing which will have an end in this world—more serious an evil than pain, or want, or sorrow; and let us constantly seek the forgiveness of our daily sins by means of that atonement which was once made upon the cross, and of that mediation which is still made for us by Him Who is our only Hope, our only Salvation. I will find out for you some passages of a sermon which has been to me very useful and encouraging; it is speaking of those persons who complain that they are not better, and say that they do not think themselves in a safe state. Read aloud from here.

A. *reads*. "When, then, a person complains of hardness of heart or weakness of purpose, let him see to it whether this complaint is more than a mere idle word, said half in jest and half in self-reproach. But should he be in earnest in his complaint, then let him consider he has no need to complain. Every thing is plain and easy to the earnest; it is the double-minded who find difficulties. . . . If a man is in earnest in wishing to get to the depths of his own heart, to expel the evil, to purify the good, and to gain power over himself, so as to *do* as well as to *know* the truth, what is the difficulty? A matter of time, indeed, but not of uncertainty, is the amendment of such a man. So simple is the rule he must follow, and so common, that at first he will be surprised to hear it. Christ says, 'Watch and pray:' herein lies our cure. To watch and to pray are surely in our power, and by these means we are certain of gaining strength. You feel your weakness, you fea to be overcome by temptation; then kee out of the way of it. Turn from bad though when they arise, set about some business, repeat some prayer to yourself with serio ness and reverence. When you are ur by temptation, keep yourself still for a ment, and think of Christ's precious bl shedding. Do not dare to say you

not help sinning; a little attention to these points will go far (through God's grace) to keep you in the right way. Pray as well as watch. You must know that you can do nothing of yourself; your past experience has taught you that: therefore, look to God for the will and the power; ask Him earnestly in His Son's name; seek His holy ordinances. Come to His holy altar, and receive the bread of life. To put out the hand, to take His gracious Body and Blood, this is no difficult work; and you say you really wish to gain the blessings He offers. What would you have more than a free gift, vouchsafed without money and without price? Well were it if men could be persuaded to be in earnest, but few are thus minded. The many go on with a double aim, trying to serve both God and Mammon. My brethren, as you desire to enter into life, see that you labour after the two foundations of true Christian faith—humbleness of mind and earnestness."

R. And here, Amy, is a prayer from the "Christian Year;" it forms the end of a poem on the cure of the deaf and dumb man by our blessed Lord (St. Mark vii. 34).

"Lord, by Thy sad and earnest eye,
When Thou didst look to heaven and sigh;
Thy voice, that with a word could chase
The dumb, deaf spirit from his place;

As Thou hast touch'd our ears, and taught
Our tongues to speak Thy praises plain,
Quell Thou each thankless, godless thought
That would make fast our bonds again.
From worldly strife, from mirth unblest,
Drowning Thy music in the breast,
From foul reproach and thrilling fears,
Preserve, good Lord, Thy servants' ears.
From idle words, that restless throng,
And haunt our hearts when we would pray,
From pride's false chime, and jarring wrong,
Seal Thou my lips, and guard the way;
For Thou hast sworn, that every ear,
Willing or loath, Thy trump shall hear;
And every tongue unchained be,
To own no hope, no God, but Thee."

A. Thank you, dear Rachel, for all th for all your patience with me; I am sure is more than I deserve. I will go ho now. Will you give my love to Ellen, a say I could not wait till she came home t evening. I ought only to keep compa with myself at present, that I may thi the more over what happened this mornir Good night, Rachel, and thank you again.

*Ellen.* Well, Amy, have you got leave?

*Amy.* Oh yes. I told my mistress that Rachel and you had asked me to go with you to-morrow to drink tea with Mary Stone, if she would be so good as to spare me; and she answered so kindly, that I was very welcome to go, she could trust me with her friend Rachel.

E. How pleasant it will be! I am busy, you see, making up the gown father gave me out of the harvest-money. Mother wishes me to put it on new to-morrow. What do you wear, Amy?

A. Oh, I have nothing new; that is, nothing new ready to wear. I have not had time to finish making the gown I bought last month. We have been very full of work lately, because we have had company in the house. I have hardly touched my needle for a fortnight, so I must not think about my new gown; I have not begun the sleeves yet, nor done much to the body.

*Rachel.* But suppose, Amy, you just fetched it here; I think I could do the body this evening, while you worked at the sleeves.

A. How very kind of you, Rachel. But are you really at leisure?

R. Run for your gown, Amy. (*Amy goes and returns.*)

A. Here it is, and the cotton to do it. And now, please, I will sit down by your side with my sleeves. I have got something in my head to ask you about.—But, Rachel, what is all this net and ribbon for?

R. It is only what I am going to use, to make up a clean cap.

A. Now I am sure, Rachel, you were going to make up your cap against to-morrow, and my gown will prevent you.

R. It will do just as well another time; I do not care about it.

A. But have you got another cap that will do?

R. Yes, I have; do not think any more about it; when you are as old as I am, you will not care more than I do about a new thing; in the mean time I am very glad to help you. As long as you do not want me to help you in making up flaunting, tawdry things, I do not grudge my trouble.

A. Do you think me foolish about my *dress?*

*R. No,* I have always told you that I

think you dress soberly and properly; it is right that you should attend to it, so as to keep yourself very neat; and there is no harm in choosing things that you think pretty, as long as you do not let yourself be tempted to spend more money upon them than is necessary. It is when girls dress unsuitably to their station that it leads them into such sad mischief. As to thinking and caring too much about one's dress, it is a question for every body to put to their own conscience; of course dress is not a subject for *much* thought and care, and only a vain and silly person can make it a matter of importance. We may be tempted unawares to think of it too much; for I am afraid that all women have some disposition to vanity.

E. I have read in some book that setting one's heart on dress, or fine things, and gay company, and making a show, is breaking that part of our baptismal vow by which we promise to renounce the "pomps and vanity of this wicked world."

R. It must be so; if we set our hearts on pomps and vanity, we cannot be said to renounce them.

A. But yet some people have fine clothes, and fine houses, and give parties, and go into company,—are they doing wrong?

R. It belongs to some stations in life to

do this: to take the chief instance—
Queen *must* live in the midst of pomps,
great people must do it in some de
The *wrong* is when people set their h
on these things, not when they live amo
them; perhaps the Queen, who has so n
other cares on her mind, may think
about her most splendid dress than yo
about a new print gown. Still I do thi
must be a temptation to those people
live much amongst the pomps and vani
the world; it must cost them some tro
to keep from setting their hearts upon t
I used to think so when I lived for a s
time with some young ladies who were
daughters of a rich gentleman; he
obliged to entertain a good many peopl
he had a command in the army, and
expected to invite the officers under hi
his house, whilst he lived amongst t
His daughters' time was a good deal t
up with company, and dinner-parties,
going out, all but the youngest daug
whose health would not allow of her g
about with her sisters. I was very y
when I went for a few months to help
of their lady's maids, whilst the other
ill; and I heard and saw much of what
going on: they seemed to be very
*young ladies*, and very kind to their
*vants; but* I used to think, as I have

saying, that it must be harder for them to keep from loving the world too much than it ought to be for me. I had just been confirmed, and of course at that time I had thought over the Catechism and the Baptismal Service a great deal, and had tried to understand what I must do in order to keep that solemn holy vow; I had in my mind that I had answered "I do" to the question whether I renewed it, and that the Bishop had laid his hand on my head, and had blessed me in God's name. When I remembered all that, I seemed to tremble at the very thought of any thing stealing my heart from God's service, and taking that blessing from me. So I could not but feel thankful that God had called me to a state of life in which I could do my duty quietly and safely, with plenty of honest employment for my time, and not much in the way to be tempted by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." But I shall never forget what happened whilst I was in that house.

A. What was it?

R. The youngest of the ladies, as I told you, had bad health, and stayed a good deal in her own room; but once she had been out to dinner with her sisters, when she was taken suddenly ill, and obliged to come home. She was put to bed, and all that

care and medical advice could do for her was done; but in two days she died.

A. How very shocking!

R. I shall never forget going into her room after she died; her illness had been so short that hardly any thing had been put away; her room looked as if she had just been sitting there: her pretty ornaments, her books, and work, and even some of the gay clothes she had worn when she was taken ill, were lying about. She was stretched upon her bed, her hair turned up under the white linen which was wrapped round her head; her face quite pale, but smiling and peaceful, and every thing so still and silent.

A. Poor thing!

R. You would not have felt inclined to pity her, if you had seen that peaceful smile. She was a good young lady; thoughtful from her early ill-health, gentle, patient, and heavenly-minded. To be sure, if her heart had been set upon the pleasures of the world, or even if it had been *only* set on her kind father and her affectionate sisters, it would have been sad for her to be taken away so early and so suddenly. But if, as there was good hope, she had been living "by faith and not by sight;" if her "life *was* hid with Christ in God;" if her treasure *was in heaven*; if her affections were set on

things above,—then it was a happy lot to be taken so early from sin and struggle—"laid up apart from the conflict of good and evil in the paradise of God." I felt then the difference between what we see and what we believe. All in the house looked so sad; and on her funeral day, when the coffin was carried down, her deserted room seemed so desolate, shewing such signs of loss and change. But when we followed the coffin to the grave, and heard the Funeral Service, and saw her laid to rest among the green mounds under the church's shade, while the setting sun lit up the wild flowers there, and the branches of the trees waved over her grave, and the birds sang amid the boughs, —then all seemed peace: it was like leaving her to her rest in the safest keeping. To be sure sight does help us, though we have faith to depend upon; for God makes churchyards beautiful, and gives us pledges of peace and joy in the green turf and in the hues of sunset.

A. And the poor sisters?

R. They sat in their room together reading—choosing those parts of the Bible which might best comfort them, and turning over religious books that she had loved. They did not care for worldly things then, you may believe; their thoughts were following *their sister* out of sight. It was a solemn,

thoughtful time to all the household; it was sad to hear the poor father's slow step as he walked about the house; but it was a time that I hope never to forget: I prayed that I might be the better for it as long as I lived, and I do not think I have ever felt a horror of death since,—she looked so still and happy! "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

A. I was thinking of what St. Paul says, that "the sting of death is sin."

R. Yes; and then follow those words full of comfort, which assure us that God gives us victory over sin and over law, to which sin gave strength, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." In His Name we may conquer: His Name is held up to us for our support, when we are laid on a bed of sickness. "Through Him Who by His cross and precious blood has redeemed us," we are invited to "receive health and salvation" (Visitation of the Sick). And when we stand over the open grave of a friend, that Name is our dependence for "perfect" consummation and bliss, "both in body and soul," to the departed, and to all the "elect" of God (Burial Service).

E. And, properly speaking, to a Christian *death should* have no sting when sin is taken *away.*

R. Surely not: none but such human infirmity of fear or sorrow as we might feel on leaving our friends or our home for a long journey when we were fully satisfied that it was our gain to go. "The sting of death is sin." I will tell you an allegory that I once heard, expressing this truth about sin and death: you know an allegory means an instructive story in which certain virtues, or qualities, or truths, are represented as living people. In the story I am talking of, there is a young man named Sintram, who is supposed to have lived many years ago, soon after the nations of the north were converted to Christianity. Sintram's father called himself a Christian, but he was as wild and fierce as if he had continued to be a heathen; and Sintram, though he was baptised in his childhood, received but a heathenish education. His mother, who was a really good Christian, was obliged to leave his father's castle whilst he was still a child, on account of the great crimes that her husband committed, and she led a religious life in retirement. Happily Sintram had a good old servant to take care of him, and pray for him, and teach him what was right; but he had a great many violent struggles with his sinful nature and his unruly passions, and he was often on the point of falling into dreadful sins. His mother prayed for him

n her retirement, and there was a good clergyman whom he sometimes visited. In order to represent to us Sintram's struggles and difficulties, we are told in the story of Sin and Death sometimes appearing to tempt and terrify him. One evening he was returning to his father's castle from a visit to the good clergyman, whose parting words to him were of warning and encouragement. The sun had set when Sintram entered a narrow pass between steep rocks, and he looked back to the town where he had parted from the clergyman, and saw its buildings high upon the hill behind him, and the windows of his friend's room catching the last light from the west; then he followed the dark path that lay before him. Presently he saw that some one was riding by his side on a little horse, and his own horse began to tremble and to snort, and to try to go back, but he obliged it to go on. The man on the little horse, who still rode by Sintram's side, asked him if he would go with him into the dark valley; Sintram said he was goin there, and had no objection to the stranger' company, and that as he himself was arme he might perhaps help the stranger in ca of need. "Help me!" the stranger e claimed. "No, I may perhaps help y *If I* cannot help you, woe to you. But *us go on.*" Sintram could just see his c

panion through the dusk of the evening, and perceived that he had a pale face, looking white as snow, and that he carried something under his garments; his horse wore a bell round its neck, which made a melancholy noise as he moved on. They rode together in silence. When the moon rose, Sintram saw his companion more clearly, and then he knew that it was the same who had appeared to him before—that it was Death. At the same time that he discovered this, he heard a voice behind him, crying out, "Stop, stop;" and he saw a little mean-looking man trying to get him to stop and listen; this was also one who had pursued him formerly,—it was Sin, who used to tempt him with all sorts of cunning snares and descriptions of worldly pleasure. Sin now began repeating these, and trying to persuade Sintram to consent to go to a beautiful country, where he would enjoy every thing he could wish for. On the other hand was Death, who now appeared as a skeleton, holding an hour-glass in his hand; his horse's bell sounded a death-toll. Sintram chose Death for his companion rather than Sin; and Sin, uttering a dreadful sound, disappeared. Sintram was left alone with Death. "Am I now yours?" he asked. "Not yet," the form replied,—"not yet, nor for many years to come. But you must not

forget me till I return." "I will keep you stedfast in memory," Sintram answered, "fearful yet healthful monitor, awful yet loving guide!" "I can look mild," Death said to him; and as he spoke a light came from the hour-glass and rested on his face, which before looked so pale, a sweet smile came over his features, and instead of the death-toll the bell sounded a psalm-tune.

A. Oh, Ellen, is not that beautiful!—but, dear me, it is getting dusk, and I must go. Have you really finished the body, Rachel?

R. Yes, dear; leave the sleeves with me, and to-morrow morning I will put them in.

A. How very kind you are! Good bye, Ellen.

E. I will walk to the gate with you.

## DIALOGUE VI.

*Amy.* I think you could not have come quite to the end of that allegory the other day when I had to run home. Did Sintram get safe to his father's castle?

*Rachel.* Yes, he did.

A. And then what happened?

R. If you want to know, I must go back to the night before Sintram's visit to the good clergyman.

A. Where was Sintram that night?

R. He came to his father's castle after having been some time away. (You understand that this was the night *before* his meeting with Sin and Death, and I am going back in the story in order to explain what happened afterwards.) He found the old man sitting in his great hall, with all the suits of armour round him which had been worn by his forefathers; and there was a little man in a traveller's dress sitting there talking with Sintram's father.

*A.* The same that used to tempt Sintram?

R. The very same; the old man and the traveller wanted Sintram to sit down with them, and they talked and laughed in a wild way; but Sintram stood looking at the tempter, and at last he took the sword which hung by his side, and held up the handle of it, which was in the form of a cross; when the tempter saw that he ran howling out of the hall, and down the stone staircase that led to it. The old man tried to call him back; but Sintram knelt down, and prayed that he might not return; and still as the old man wished for his return, his steps were heard coming up the stone staircase, and as Sintram prayed against him his steps sounded more and more distant,—this lasted till morning, when the old man fell asleep, and Sintram, after sleeping too for a little while, got upon his horse, and went to visit the clergyman who was his friend.

A. And it was in coming back that same evening that he found Sin and Death in the dark valley?

R. Yes, it was. And, as I told you, he sent away Sin by resisting his temptation steadily, and deciding rather to be left with Death than go along with Sin.

A. And then Death put on that pleasant look?

R. Yes, when Sin was gone. The

had risen brightly when Sintram reached his father's castle, and he came into it looking bright and joyful himself after his victory; he had the comfort of finding the old man quiet now, and penitent; and of seeing him die, which he did soon after in a way very different from his life. After his death, Sintram went to find out his mother in her retirement, and was received by her most gladly and affectionately. He did as much good as his father had done harm, and spent his time in active useful employments, in visiting his mother and attending religious services with her, and with his good friend the clergyman: and as the story says, he was not again pursued by Sin and Death tempting and terrifying him: which of course means, that when a person has resisted the temptations to sin, and has reconciled his mind to the prospect of death, temptations and terrors lose their power over him.

A. And Sintram lived well, and died at last in peace?

R. He did, and so ends the allegory.

A. Can you think of any other? I can understand that one, and I should like so much to hear more.

E. Rachel, tell her that one about the lady under the tree.

R. There was once a young maiden who lived in her father's castle, and one night

she went out by moonlight into the forest which surrounded the castle; she stopped under an old oak-tree, and as she was quite alone, she knelt down to say her prayers there: but whilst she was kneeling, she heard something groan, and she found a woman, splendidly dressed and very beautiful, who lay there as if she was ill. The maiden, who had come from the castle, took this stranger home, out of kindness, and as it was late at night, and she did not like to disturb her father, she took her up into her own room to sleep with her. The story tells that this was not really a distressed stranger, but a wicked tempting spirit in the form of a woman, who tried to put evil thoughts into the poor young maiden's mind as she lay in bed; and that she was much troubled by these bad thoughts, such as she had not been used to; for she had been brought up to pray constantly, and to keep her mind pure from wickedness; so these strange thoughts made her tremble and feel very unhappy, but still she shook them off, and at last she slept quietly; and when she awoke she felt as if she had dreamed bad dreams, and she got up and prayed that whatever unknown evil had been in her mind might be forgiven, and *might* be taken away from her; then she *thought* of her good mother, who had been *for some* time dead, and she felt easy again

for the evil spirit who had tempted her could now have no power against her. You plainly see the meaning of this—that even in our prayers and acts of charity we may be tempted; but those who are devout and pure of heart, as this young maiden is described to have been, shake off temptation, and remain unhurt. Ill words or bad companions shock and pain them, but cannot do them lasting harm: their prayers are their defence, and they remain pure, even if they are exposed to scenes of wickedness, at which they would never have chosen to be present.—Another allegory I have heard of a castle guarded by a great fire, so that when the bravest and strongest men tried to get in, and to help the prisoners who were shut up in it, they were driven back by the flames; but there came a maiden, who was pure in heart and life, and she walked unhurt through the fire, the flames giving way before her. There is another allegory of a lady who was coming home to her father's house, with her two brothers to take care of her; she was tired and hungry by the way, and they stopped in a wood, where her brothers left her to rest herself while they went to get food for her; but whilst they were gone it grew dark, and there came to her a wicked magician who lived in that wood, and ensnared all the travellers passing through it; he used to per-

suade them to drink out of a cup of his, in which was a mixture that tasted pleasant, but as soon as they had swallowed it, they were changed into beasts.

A. That must mean the pleasures of sin, which change men into beasts. But did the poor lady drink of that cup?

R. The magician tried all he could to persuade her, and as she was so faint and hungry, he told her it would refresh her; but she would not touch it, and at last her brothers found her and set her free, and drove away the magician.

A. What does that mean in the allegory?

R. I do not know exactly. It does not always happen that every part of an allegory has a particular meaning: but it might mean the help there is in good friends when we are tempted to sin.

E. That cup puts me in mind of the poem in the Christian Year for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, where it says—

> "Such is the world's gay garish feast
> In her first charming bowl,
> Infusing all that fires the breast,
> Or cheats the unwary soul."

R. And so it goes on, if you remember, about the bad mixture that the world gives us to drink, and says how unlike it is to our Saviour's "feast of heavenly love;" and then it asks—

"Why should we think youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy
Which God has deign'd to bless?"

A. The meaning of all the allegories you have told us seems to be, that there is a strength in purity and holiness which nothing can get the better of. But then *our* purity and holiness are not our own—are they?

R. No; our holiness is not our own, but we are more sure of it, more really possessed of it, than if it was ours; for whatever is our own must be human and mortal, but the gift of righteousness to Christians is the indwelling of their gracious Lord,—so that He is to them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded (St. Paul goes on) that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." If our righteousness was *ours*, it might fail us, "but it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure;" and therefore we must work out "our own sal-

vation with fear and trembling"—fearing at God's presence within us, so as to "rejoice with trembling" (Ps. ii. Bible version)—and working diligently, as being sure that almighty power is ready to help us. We read of the women who visited the sepulchre, that when the angels told them Christ was risen, they "departed quickly with fear and great joy;" on which words of St. Matthew there is a poem in the "Christian Year" (for Tuesday in Easter-week), and these two verses make part of it:—

"They who have sought, nor hope to find,
Wear not so bright a glance;
They who have won their earthly mind,
Less reverently advance.

But where, in gentle spirits, fear
And joy so duly meet,
These sure have seen the angels near,
And kiss'd the Saviour's feet."

And after they had kissed His feet, do you see what they did next?

A. Yes; they went at once to obey Him by telling His disciples.

R. Obedience is the sure sign of love. It is not *news* to us, as it was to the shepherds when the angels told the glad tidings to them, that Christ had been born among men to become their Saviour; it is not *news* to us, as it was to the women who went to the sepulchre, that He has risen from the dead, to complete our salvation; and as it is no

*new* thing to us, we cannot feel sudden fear and joy, such as the shepherds and the women felt, but abiding fear and joy we should ever feel; fear and reverence at having our Lord and Master brought so near us, and at the hopes He allows us to feel. With such thoughts, dear Amy, you should look back to your baptism, when you were washed in that fountain for the remission of sins, and had the white garment of salvation put upon you, in which you may walk safely through the dusty and thorny ways of this world,—provided you are careful to keep it white.

A. But I am afraid it is not white now,—I am afraid I have soiled it.

R. No doubt you have more or less; but then you are allowed night and morning, and oftener still, to wash it white in the Blood of the Atonement. As the Jews continually performed the washings and expiations of their law, which was but a type of the true Sacrifice,—so are we Christians called to wash continually in that Blood which takes away all sin. You have been allowed to do this, to seek forgiveness through Christ, from the time when you learned to say the Lord's Prayer; you have ever been allowed to draw near to God through our Great High Priest. And now you have to look forward to still greater and more awful privileges, by the laying *on of* the hands of the Bishop. After

that, you will be admitted to the Altar of the Lord,—to the commemoration of the sacrifice of the death of Christ,—and to communion in His body and blood, by means of which you may receive all the benefits of His death and passion, and may be strengthened with that heavenly food to support you through your whole journey on earth, and to give you immortal life in the world to come. You will be admitted to more full communion with the Church of Christ,—with Him, as your Lord, and with all His members; and while such increasing blessings are bestowed upon you, you will have more of that "fear and great joy," which must be your habitual feelings, to keep you from falling, and encourage you to proceed. I will read you some passages out of a sermon on the Christian joy of Easter-day:—"That 'Holy Thing' which was born of the Virgin Mary, was 'the Son,' not of man, but of 'God.' Others have all been born in sin, after Adam's likeness; and being born in sin, they are heirs to corruption. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' But when the Word of Life was manifested in our flesh, the Holy Child was sinless and immortal; though death might overpower Him, it could not keep possession of Him. '*It was impossible* he should be holden of it,' *it had no dominion* over Him. He was the

'living among the dead.' By His resurrection from the dead, He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness.' He was then manifested as perfect God and perfect man; and in the immortality of His holiness, He ascended up on high to take possession of His kingdom. He ascended into heaven, that He might plead our cause with the Father; and as it is said, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' Yet in leaving us He did not withdraw from His work of loving mercy towards us on earth. 'The Holy One of God' was ordained, not only to die for us, but also to be the beginning of a new creation unto holiness in our sinful race; to refashion soul and body after His own likeness, that they might be raised up together, and sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Blessed for ever be His holy name! before He went away He remembered our necessity, and completed His work, bequeathing to us a special mode of approaching Him; a holy mystery, in which we receive the virtue of that heavenly Body, which is the life of all that believe. This is the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist, in which 'Christ is evidently set forth, crucified amongst us;' that we, feasting upon the sacrifice, 'may be partakers of the divine nature.' 'As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given

to the Son to have life in Himself.' T
are Christ's words; and afterwards He
'Because I live, ye shall live also.' A
in His own gracious words, He is 'the B
of life.' 'The Bread of God is He w
cometh down from heaven, and giveth
unto the world.' 'I am the living b
which came down from heaven; if any
eat of this bread, he shall live for ever;
the bread that I will give is my flesh, w
I will give for the life of the world.' 'W
so eateth My flesh, and drinketh My b
hath eternal life, and I will raise him
the last day.' We are told that when He
on earth, 'the whole multitude sough
touch Him; for there went virtue ou
Him, and healed them all.' And
the woman with the issue of blood tou
Him, He 'immediately knew that virtue
gone out of Him.' Thus when we appr
Him in faith, He can give us the virtu
His purity and incorruption, and sow
seed of eternal life in body and soul.
pray, in the Service of the Communion, '
our sinful bodies may be made clean by
body, and our souls washed by His
precious blood; and that we may ever
dwell in Him, and He in us.' In His Ch
He still dispenses blessings, such as
world knows not of. Blessed are the
*they knew* their blessedness, who are all

as we are, week after week, and festival after festival, to seek and find in His holy Church the Saviour of their souls. Blessed are they beyond language or thoughts, to whom it is vouchsafed to receive those tokens of His love, the pledges and means of His special presence in the sacrament of His Supper; who are allowed to eat and drink the food of immortality, and receive life from the bleeding side of the Son of God!"

*Amy.* I forgot to ask you the other day, Rachel, how you happened to know all those pretty allegories that you have told. Where did you meet with them? I seldom see you read any books at your leisure times except those of the "Christian Knowledge Society," and a few other books which your mistress gave you.

*Rachel.* I seldom do read any others, for I have not a great deal of time for reading; and when I read any thing besides my Bible, and those books of devotion which are for constant use, I like it to be something from which I expect to get improvement, or at least something quite *safe;* for I know that people who have no more learning than I have, may get harm instead of good, if they read much at random, and dip into books without knowing any thing about them.

*A. No* more learning than you have, Ra*chel! why* I think you have a great deal.

R. There is an old saying, that "the one-eyed may be taken for a guide among the blind." I do not mean, my dear Amy, that you are blind; you have as much opportunity for seeing as I have, and I have only the advantage of having lived more years than you have yet done; but I do mean that I can only call myself one-eyed, and that with a very dim sight, compared to those people who have learning really. Happily the right way is made plain, by God's mercy, to the unlearned, if they are not wise in their own conceits, but use thankfully the means of guidance which He gives them. But I have not answered your question about the allegories. I heard them from a niece of my dear old mistress, who was once staying with her; she was in bad health, poor young lady, and she used to lie on the sofa reading. I attended upon her whilst she was with Mrs. Andrews, and she used to like to tell me stories out of the books that she read.

A. Do try and remember some more of her stories.

R. She told me some out of a book of poetry that she was very fond of; it was full of invented stories about old times—not true histories; but she told me that so much as this was true—that in old times (I mean, since there have been kings reigning in Eng-

land whose histories are known) there were more troubles and disquiets than we have now in our peaceful days; people who broke the laws could not be brought to justice as they are now, and the powerful often oppressed the weak. But whilst some people who had power abused it grievously, others made it their object to help the oppressed, and to prevent injustice. Those men who rode on horseback dressed in armour, and who were valiant in fighting, were called 'knights,' and used to go about the country, some of them for good purposes, and others for bad. In the poems that Miss Julia was so fond of, there were stories founded upon this state of things; and the stories were allegories, for in them the good knights were supposed to be striving against sin and evil; and their difficulties, and dangers, and victories, represented the Christian conflict.

A. That in which we are bound "to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil."

R. Yes; she told me the story of one of these knights which was in her book; he was called the 'Red-cross knight,' for he wore a red cross upon his shield. He was going on an expedition against a terrible *dragon,* which laid waste the country; and *he had for* his companion a lady, who was

all truth and purity, and who guided him on his way; but in the course of his journey he fell in with false guides and deceivers, and was so much led astray by them, that he left his true guide, this lady called Una, and followed a false and treacherous lady, who undertook to lead him; she brought him to the house of Pride, where Pride is described as living in splendour, with the various other vices attending upon her; and the knight was persuaded to engage himself in her service, till finding the error which he had fallen into, he was nearly prevailed upon by Despair to put an end to his life; however, he escaped from the dreadful cave in which he had found Despair, and at last Una joined him again, and led him to the house of Holiness, where all the virtues are described as living. When he arrived there, he was in a wretched state, having lost all his strength and spirits through his past wanderings after evil guides. He was put under the charge of Repentance, who brought him to himself by severe discipline; when he had undergone this, he was admitted to Faith, Hope, and Charity, and allowed to see the beauties and wonders of the house of Holiness. After a time, having recovered his strength, he proceeded on his journey, found the terrible dragon, and killed it, but not without a long and dangerous struggle.

A. Does the lady called Una mean any particular virtue?

R. I think Miss Julia said she meant Truth, who is to be the guide of the Christian's way. She told me, I remember, that the name of Una means *one*, which seems to remind us of that singleness of heart which is so necessary to a Christian.

A. Una means *one*, as *unity* in the Prayer-book means *oneness*—does it not?

R. Yes, it does. I am sure we should lose our way in our Christian pilgrimage, if we were to lose our singleness of heart; if we part from that, we get distracted among many objects, many guides,—and all unsafe ones. Do you remember that poem in the "Christian Year," for the 18th Sunday after Trinity, where our state as Christians is compared to that of the Israelites in the desert; and we are reminded how they went astray and finally perished, because they served a multitude of idols? Our idols are wealth, pleasure, power, honour, or such as these, which will draw us on to our destruction, if we give up our hearts to them. And so the poem ends with this prayer:

"Lord, wave again Thy chastening rod,
*Till* every idol throne
*Crumble* to dust, and Thou, O God,
*Reign* in our hearts alone.

Bring all our wandering fancies home,
  For Thou hast every spell;
And mid the heathen where they roam,
  Thou knowest, Lord, too well.

Thou know'st our service sad and hard,
  Thou know'st us fond and frail;
Win us to be beloved and spared,
  When all the world shall fail.

So, when at last our weary days
  Are well nigh wasted here,
And we can trace Thy wondrous ways
  In distance calm and clear;

When, in Thy love and Israel's sin,
  We read *our* story true,
We may not, all too late, begin
  To wish our hopes were new.

Long loved, long tried, long spared as they,
  Unlike in this alone,
That by Thy grace our hearts may stay
  For evermore Thine own."

*Christian Year*, 18*th S. after Trinity.*

I knew that poem when I was quite young, and I was very fond of it; for what is said in the verses I have just repeated seems so true of young people in particular. They are apt to have "wandering fancies," going after things that are not really worth caring for; and when we feel such vain fancies and eager wishes, it is such a comfort to know, that if we pray to God to keep us stedfast, He will not turn His ear from our prayer. He sees *all the* secrets of our hearts; and "it is our

comfort to know this, and to trust Him for help against ourselves." He knows all the thoughts that come into our hearts, every one of them (Ezek. xi. 5); and He knows which of these thoughts we ought to get rid of. We must ask Him to bring our hearts "home" to Himself, who is their only sure resting-place; and if we ask in earnest, He will grant our request. When the days of our youth are passed, and we can trace His ways of Providence towards us, we may be able to look back, and see how wisely and how well He led us—how he guarded us from danger—recalled us when we were wandering—chastised us in mercy when we were careless, and won us to His love. But in order that He may do all this for us, we must watch as well as pray; we must set a guard upon our hearts, if we really wish Him to guard them for us; and we must be very careful not to set up any idol, not to attempt to serve two masters. There are many passages in the Bible about that singleness of heart without which we cannot walk in the narrow road to heaven. There is one in the 2d Book of Chronicles, where it is said, that in the reign of King Asa the people of Judah "entered into a covenant to *seek the* Lord God of their fathers with all *their heart* and all their soul;" and afterwards it is added, "And all Judah rejoiced

at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought Him with their whole desire: and He was found of them" (2 Chron. xv.). That verse seems exactly to describe the right frame of spirit for making a vow of giving ourselves up to God's service,—as *we* do when we are confirmed: "all Judah rejoiced," because "they had sworn with *all* their heart, and sought Him with their *whole* desire." And then we are told, "He was found of them; and the Lord gave them rest round about." On the other hand, when the elders of Israel came before God, in Ezekiel's time, He reproved them by the mouth of His prophet, and would not accept the offering of their lips, when He knew how much their hearts had wandered from Him. "Thus saith the Lord God, Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols" (Ezek. xiv.). God would not give him an answer according to his *words*, which professed a trust in God, but "according to the multitude of his idols," which he had set up in his heart. And in the New Testament we find such strong exhortations *from* our blessed Lord and His apos-

tles, to singleness of heart. Those words of our Lord: "The light of the body is the eye; therefore, when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light: but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body, therefore, be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light" (St. Luke xi.). It seems as if, in answer to these words, we might use the words of the 11th verse of Psalm lxxxvi.: "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth; O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy name."

A. I think, Rachel, I quite understand what you say, and I have read it in books, —that *we* may have idols, as God's people of old had, though of a different kind. I suppose we are to take the first and second commandments as warning us against our idols. Do you think *I* have any idols? I was just considering.

R. I suppose that is a question which we must each ask of our own conscience: whatever we love, or fear, or serve, more than *God's will*, is our particular idol.

*A. I have* got something to tell you about

and this reminds me of it. Those words of the poem that you were repeating, "Bring all our wandering fancies home," reminded me exactly of what happened to me the other day. You know, that before my mistress left home she gave leave to Hannah and me to go by railroad to spend a day in London. Cook was to go too, to take care of us. Well, before I set off, I said to myself, "Now, I will remember all Rachel's good advice; I will not spoil this day of pleasure by being cross or pettish to my companions." I resolved upon this very seriously, and tried to do as you have advised me, and to pray that I might keep my good resolutions: and I think I did keep them. I attended to what the cook said, as soon as she told me it was time to come home; and I believe I minded her all the time we were out; and I believe I was good-humoured to Hannah, and did not set myself up to give her advice out of place. And so the party was very pleasant. We saw a great deal: the fine large garden where the birds and beasts are kept, and some pictures of places a long way off; besides all the grand buildings that we passed in our walk, and the Parks. And besides that, we went to a beautiful shop, to get some things that we wanted. I never saw so many fine things

as there were in that shop. I enjoyed it all; but when I came home that night, and the next day, I found it so difficult to fix my thoughts to saying my prayers and reading the Bible. All the things I had seen came before my eyes, and all sorts of stray thoughts came into my head; and I began to be afraid that there was no use in keeping my good resolutions about my temper, if I fell into another sort of temptation whilst I resisted that.

R. I am not at all surprised at what you say; for I know that it is very apt to be the case when people, and particularly young people, are put in the way of any new sights and amusements. I am very glad you remarked it; for it shews that you watch yourself, and without watching ourselves we shall never go on right; it shews that you *try* to attend to saying your prayers and reading the Bible, or you would not take notice when your attention was more distracted than usual.

A. Besides what I said about being disturbed then, when it was time for my regular prayers and reading, there was something else. I sometimes repeat any thing I have learned to myself in the course of the day, or think over any thing I have read; *but after* I had been sight-seeing, my thoughts

seemed too much in confusion for me to recollect any thing, they were so crowded with these new sights and places.

R. I daresay. I am glad you took notice of this too.

A. But it is not enough to take notice of it, unless I get rid of it; and I am afraid I did not get rid of it till the distraction went off of itself, after a time.

R. No doubt it is a thing to take pains about. I can quite enter into your difficulty, because at one time of my life I remember feeling what you complain of to such a great degree.

A. Did you really, Rachel,—you who are so very steady? I never should have thought of *your* being unsettled.

R. Oh, my dear Amy, I am afraid you know little about me! But what I have to say now, is only that you must not think that you had gained *nothing* when you kept your resolutions about being good-tempered and gentle, although you did fall into other temptations. That is just what happens to us: when we are mending in one point, we find out some other that we must attend to.

A. Just as if I had darned one great hole, and, when I was going to fold up the thing I had darned, I met with another hole, and had to set to work again.

*R.* Exactly so. But then you would think

it a good thing done that you had mended one; only you would be aware that your work was not come to an end yet.

A. And if the holes were of my own making, I suppose I might be ashamed to find so many.

R. Ashamed, but not discouraged; ashamed of ourselves, distrustful of ourselves, but not out of heart—that is what we ought to be. But now about these new sights that distracted you, I will find you a passage out of a sermon, and then you must run home. "Beware of the subtilty of your enemy, who would fain rob you of your defence. Be on your guard especially when you get into new situations or circumstances which interest or delight you, lest they throw you out of your regularity in prayer. Any thing new or unexpected is dangerous to you. Going much into mixed society, and seeing many strange persons, taking share in any pleasant amusements, reading interesting books, entering into any new line of life, forming some new acquaintance, the prospect of any worldly advantage, travelling—all these things and such like, innocent as they are in themselves and capable of a religious use, become means of temptation, if *we are not* on our guard. See that you are *not unsettled* by them—this is the danger; *fear becoming unsettled.* Consider that sta-

bility of mind is the chief of virtues; for it is faith. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee' (Isaiah xxvi. 3). This is the promise. But 'the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked' (Isaiah lvii. 20, 21). Nor to the wicked only, in our common sense of the word 'wicked,' but to none is there rest who in any way leave their God, and rove after the goods of this world. Do not indulge visions of earthly good; fix your hearts on higher things; let your morning and evening thoughts be the points of rest for your mind's eye, and let those thoughts be upon the narrow way and the blessedness of heaven, and the glory and power of Christ your Saviour. Thus will you be kept from unseemly risings and fallings, and steadied in an equable way. Men in general will know nothing of this; they witness not your private prayers, and they will confuse you with the multitude they fall in with. But your friends and acquaintance will gain a light and a comfort from your example; they will see your good works, and be led to trace them to their true secret source, the influences of the Holy Ghost sought and obtained by prayer. Thus

they will glorify your heavenly Father, ar
in imitation of you will seek Him; and F
who seeth in secret shall at length rewa
you openly."

## DIALOGUE VIII.

RACHEL—AMY.

*Amy.* I want to ask you something more about what we talked of the other day—being distracted and made inattentive by things that we see and do. I suppose that people who have plenty of employment, and even hard work to do, do not find themselves tempted to vain and idle thoughts, as others do who have only to amuse themselves.

*Rachel.* That is, indeed, one great use of employment and honest labour, that it keeps the mind from wandering in a dangerous way.

A. But still we cannot keep ourselves from some changes of place and company; and the passage from the sermon that you shewed me says, that things which are harmless in themselves, or even useful in some respects, may yet be hurtful to us, if we are not careful—such as change of place or employment, making new acquaintances, reading new books.

R. Yes; and therefore the preacher recommends stability, *stedfastness*, as our safeguard.

A. And the question is, how are we to become stedfast? No doubt that must come from God, like every other good quality, and we must pray for it; but of course we must try for it too—we must not wait till it comes.

R. I suppose the one great thing to keep us stedfast is the thought of the unchangeable God, of His eye always upon us. If we really could keep the thought of God always present, we should have singleness of purpose and stability, for we should have true faith. We should make it always our first object to please God, and to keep from offending Him. But as God is invisible, and as the things which we see are apt to take up our thoughts, and even to make us forget God's presence, we must try to remind ourselves of Him in all the ways which He has pointed out to us. We ought to see Him in the works of His hands. I suppose Adam and Eve, whilst they were in Paradise, were never distracted from the thought of their Maker by any of the things that were around them. And even now, ever since the fall, *this world* which God made is still so beautiful and wonderful, that it may well bring Him to our minds, and dispose us to adore

Him. I believe most people feel this more or less. When we see the sun rise or set, when the spring is coming on, or when the trees are rich with the colours of autumn—when any thing particularly draws our notice to the works of God, we can hardly help thinking of Him, and our hearts must feel disposed to love and thank Him. The Bible teaches us how to deepen this love, and to sanctify this thankfulness, by raising our thoughts from what we see to what we cannot see. We there learn that the rising of the sun should be to us an image of the Sun of Righteousness, our blessed Saviour; that the stars may be tokens to us of the future glory of those saints who have turned many to righteousness (Dan. xii. 3); and in many other objects which are often present to our sight, the Bible directs us to a meaning beyond their outward appearance. The shepherd taking care of his flock is an image of the good Shepherd, according to our Lord's own gracious words (John x. 11, 14, &c.), which confirm what we read in the 23d Psalm, and carry our thoughts on to the promise in the Book of Revelations (vii. 17). The sower, the vine, the unfruitful fig-tree, all have their meaning in our Lord's parables. Our natural appetites of hunger and thirst are made use of to direct us to the *bread of life* (John vi. 51), and to the water

which is a well of life (John iv. 14). The faith of Christians is compared to gold tried in the fire (1 Pet. i. 7), and the elect of God to precious stones, whose strength and brightness is enduring (Mal. iii. 17, Zech. ix. 16); whilst the natural life of man is compared to the flower that fades, and the grass that is cut down (Psalm xc. 5, 6; Isaiah xl. 6, 7; Job xiv. 2). In these and in many other instances we are taught how to draw instruction from the most common objects and incidents of life. But I must read you a very beautiful passage out of a sermon, which speaks of the thoughts excited in Christians by the works of creation. "To those that live by faith, every thing they see speaks of that future world; the very glories of nature, the sun, moon, and stars, and the richness and the beauty of the earth, are as types and figures witnessing and teaching the invisible things of God. All that we see is destined one day to burst forth into a heavenly bloom, and to be transfigured into immortal glory. Heaven at present is out of sight; but in due time, as snow melts and discovers what it lay upon, so will this visible creation fade away before those greater splendours which are behind it, and on which at present it depends. In that day shadows will retire, and the substance shew itself. The sun will grow pale and be lost in the

sky; but it will be before the radiance of Him whom it does but image, the Sun of Righteousness, with healing on His wings, who will come forth in visible form, as a bridegroom out of his chamber, as His perishable type decays. The stars which surround it will be replaced by saints and angels circling His throne. Above and below, the clouds of the air, the trees of the field, the waters of the great deep, will be found full of the forms of everlasting spirits, the servants of God, which do His pleasure. Let such be your thoughts, especially in the spring season, when the whole face of nature is so rich and beautiful. Then the leaves come out, and the blossoms on the fruit-trees and flowers, and the grass and corn spring up. Well, that shews you, as by a sample, what can be done at God's command, when He gives the word. This earth, which now buds forth in leaves and blossoms, will one day burst forth into a new world of light and glory, in which we shall see saints and angels dwelling. The season of spring may delay, but come it will at last. So it is with the coming of that eternal spring for which all Christians are waiting. Come it will, though it delay; yet, though it tarry, let us wait for it. Therefore we say, day by day, 'Thy kingdom come;' as if we said, 'O Lord, shew Thyself, manifest Thyself;

Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shew Thyself.' We know much more lies hid in the world than we see. A world of saints and angels, a glorious world, the palace of God, the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the heavenly Jerusalem, the throne of God and Christ—all these wonders, everlasting, all-precious, mysterious, and incomprehensible, lie hid in what we see. Shine forth, O Lord, as when, on Thy nativity, Thine angels visited the shepherds; let Thy glory blossom forth, as bloom and foliage on the trees. Bright as is the sun, and the sky, and the clouds, green as are the leaves and the fields, sweet as is the singing of birds, we know that they are not all, and we will not take up with a part for the whole. Blessed are they who shall at length behold what as yet mortal eye hath not seen, and faith only enjoys!"

A. There is a poem in the "Christian Year," that speaks in something the same way; it is the one for Septuagesima Sunday, on that text, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made."

R. Yes; I like that poem very much indeed.

*A. And* in the Hymns of the Primitive *Church* which you gave me, there are hymns *for every* day of the week; in which the dif-

ferent works of the creation on each day are mentioned for our instruction, as well as to excite us to praise God for His wonderful works. I like the hymn for Sunday which speaks of the sunrise; and the hymns for noon and evening are of the same kind.

R. It is very pleasant to have the wonders which are before our eyes thus turned to their right use; and the world is full of wonders.

A. But, Rachel, the *world* must be spoken of with a very different meaning, when St. John says in his 1st Epistle, that it should not be loved by Christians (1 John ii. 15); and when we learn in the Catechism to renounce the world.

R. Yes; there it means the world, not as God made it, but as man has abused it. Since the fall of Adam, the world has been full of the selfishness, and contention, and misery, which come from men seeking to please themselves, instead of seeking to please God. They did not look at His works thankfully, but covetously and greedily; they lost the recollection of the unseen Creator, and cared only for the things which they could see; they tried to keep up wealth, or to indulge all their notions of pleasure, or to get power, and to have many lands and many subjects, *and then* they quarrelled for the possession *of those* things which they coveted. And so,

as St. Paul tells us, "they became vain in their imaginations, their foolish heart was darkened," and they changed the image of the incorruptible God into idols of their own inventing. Here and there among the heathen, God was worshipped by some men wiser than their countrymen; but it was only among the Jews that His memory was preserved by a common worship, and even the Jews often turned to idolatry. At length God was manifested to mankind, not in the works of creation, but in His only-begotten Son, the express image of His glory, who took our nature and lived among men. And when the gracious purpose of His coming was completed, and He returned again to heaven, He did not leave this world as He had found it, but He set up His Church in the world, to be a constant witness of the invisible God, as well as to be the channel of His mercies to men.

A. The Church was set up *in* this world; but I suppose the world itself did not become holy,—because when we are received into the Church by Baptism, we are called upon to renounce the world, with the flesh and the devil.

R. In this sense the *world* seems to mean *those outward* things, visible to our eyes *which may* distract us from the care of our *own souls* (unseen to us, though they are

very selves), and from the thought of God, who is as near to us as our own souls, and like them unseen. We are told that Christians have no home in this world, that they have only to pass through it in their way to the next world, and that therefore they should live and act as travellers do, who may look with pleasure and interest at the country through which they travel, and may gain instruction from what they see, but do not think of setting their hearts on any thing short of their journey's end.

A. And for fear we should be foolish enough to do so, we are warned so often in the Bible, not to make idols of the things of this world.

R. There is something very instructive in what we are told of Eve's temptation, when she resolved to eat the forbidden fruit. "She saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." This seems to answer to St. John's account of "all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh," as when Eve "saw that the tree was good for food;" "the lust of the eyes,"—as when she saw "that it was pleasant to the eyes;" "and the pride of life," as when the devil persuaded her that it would "make one wise." "The lust of the flesh" tempts us to *indulge* our appetites, even when they are

contrary to God's commands; "the lust of the eyes" tempts us with "the pomps and vanity of this wicked world," tempts us to look till we covet; and "the pride of life" tempts us to a false self-conceited wisdom, contrary to Christian humility. Of all these, St. John goes on to say, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof;" and then he reminds us that "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 16, 17). And when St. Peter has been telling the Christians to whom he writes, that they "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people," he tells them just afterwards, that "as strangers and pilgrims" they "must abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;" he *beseeches* them to abstain (1 Pet. ii. 9-11). So does the voice of the Church sound in our ears, from day to day, and from year to year; in the whole round of her sacred services she continually holds forth to us the glory and blessing of our Christian privileges; and, at the same time, she beseeches her children to abstain from all the defilements of the world, to walk as strangers and pilgrims; that so the heirs of a heavenly inheritance may not "walk in a vain shadow," and disquiet themselves "in vain," like worldly men; but may so walk, as finally to attain to the mansions which *their* Saviour is preparing. The higher our

Christian calling, the greater will be our fall if we do not live according to it.

> " So like an angel's is our bliss,
> (O thought to comfort and appal),
> It needs must bring, if used amiss,
> An angel's hopeless fall."
>
> *Christian Year, Sunday after Trinity.*

## DIALOGUE IX.

*Amy.* Rachel, I have been looking over a book that was given me by my dear aunt Patty, and a very nice book it is—"Jones's Book of Nature"—and there we are taught, in a very pleasant way, how to draw good thoughts from every thing we see. And then, in every thing that we *do*, we ought to be able to remember God, because, as you have constantly repeated to me, we may "do all to the glory of God." And so I may draw near to Him, and think of Him, by doing small things and common things in a right way. If I am strictly honest, true, and fair, and open, in all my words; if I am diligent in doing my work, careful to do it the best I can, not afraid of trouble, not cross or fretful at little inconveniences, not making much of difficulties; if I am good-tempered and obliging to all my fellow-servants, and respectful to those who are above me, and who have *to direct* me in my work; if I am faithful in *all respects* to my master and mistress; if I *keep from* idleness and gossiping; if I am

not eager to have the best of things, not thinking too much of myself:—O Rachel, how many things I have to mind! how many ways of going wrong!

R. Yes; but there is *one* right way, and, thanks be to God, we may find that way; and we are sure of His help, if we try to walk steadily in it. He will "turn away" our "eyes from beholding vanity," and "quicken" us in His "way" (Ps. cxix. 37).

A. After counting over my daily duties of the station in which I am placed, I come to my daily duty of reading the Bible and praying.

R. Without which all the rest will go wrong.

A. And in fulfilling these I must try more and more to be attentive, and to keep my thoughts steady.

R. We must try every day, every time we read and pray—not merely when we feel inclined to be serious—and by practice we shall get command over our thoughts, God helping us. No doubt the holiest men have found this sometimes difficult, and have had to strive against wandering thoughts; we may believe that they have felt the difficulty, because they have given advice and rules for keeping our thoughts fixed; and they have expressed the weakness of our nature, and the temptations to which it is exposed in

this respect as well as in others. Do you remember the poem in the "Christian Year," for the 12th Sunday after Trinity, on the deaf and dumb man whom our Saviour made able to hear and speak? I advise you to learn by heart the prayer with which it ends:

"As Thou hast touch'd our ears, and taught
Our tongues to speak Thy praises plain,
Quell thou each thankless, godless thought
That would make fast our bonds again.
From worldly strife, from mirth unblest,
Drowning Thy music in the breast;
From foul reproach, from thrilling fears,
Preserve, good Lord, Thy servant's ears.

From idle words, that restless throng,
And haunt our hearts when we would pray;
From pride's false chime, and jarring wrong,
Seal Thou my lips and guard the way:
For Thou hast sworn that every ear,
Willing or loath, Thy trump shall hear,
And every tongue unchained be,
To own no hope, no God, but Thee."

A. I suppose the "mirth unblest" means unholy mirth, any thing improper or profane.

R. Yes; all such foolish and wicked jests, or loose talking, as Christian women more particularly should shrink from with horror. Christian mirth should be as innocent and as far from wicked thoughts as the singing of birds; otherwise it drowns "God's music in the breast." And now that we have *thought* over the helps to recollect God's

presence, which we may get from the things we see and the things we do, we may go on to think of the help granted to us in the ordinances and services of the Church, by which we seem to be more distinctly brought into His presence and under His care; and in which we find ourselves to be already in the kingdom of God, as it is established on earth, with the hope and foresight of His heavenly kingdom. We then feel ourselves members of Christ's body, and look to Him Who is our Head to be to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and we belong to that government which was first established by the Apostles, under their Lord's directions, and by help of the Holy Spirit; and has ever since been continued by the Bishops, who are successors to the Apostles in Christ's spiritual kingdom.

A. I have heard their succession compared to the links of a chain, one joined into another, and so going on to any length.

R. Yes, that gives one a very plain idea of it; and so in England the first Archbishop of Canterbury, Augustine (who converted our countrymen to Christianity), received consecration from the hands of some Bishops then living, and since Augustine there has been a succession to the present time, to the Archbishop now living, by whom

the Queen was crowned; and so it has been with the other Bishops. I have read some lines which were written upon our Lord's words (John xx. 22) when He breathed on His Apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c.; and in these lines the succession of the Bishops from the Apostles is called Christ's

> "Saintly chain unbroken,
> Lengthening while the world lasts on,
> From His cross unto His throne."

Christ's Church has lasted from the time that He suffered and rose again, and we have His promise that it shall last till He comes again. Great is our blessing that we are members of that holy Catholic Church, that we have ministers ordained by the Bishops, and that we have a share in all the services of the Church, as we find them in the Prayer-book.

A. There is a great deal said about the services in the Prayer-book in that book you lent me, called the "Christian Guide;" it goes through the different services, and shews how they may guide us and comfort us. I was reading it the other day, and thinking that it is very comfortable to have such thoughts to turn to when one is frightened at looking forward, and not knowing what may happen to one even in a week's time, much less in one's whole life. Every

day some shocking accident seems to happen, or some trouble comes upon people when they least expect it.

R. And when we see such things, or hear of them, we have but one stay and support for ourselves—a trust in His care, of whom we are told in His own Word that we should cast all our care upon Him; for He careth for us. There is no use in tormenting ourselves with fears of what may happen; but our part is to go on from day to day trying to live like God's children, and then we are sure of His loving mercy and tender care making all things work together for our good. When we read the Prayer-book, still more when we take part in its services, we find ourselves to be in this case children of God, with nothing really to fear but our own sinfulness.

A. The "Christian Guide" goes through the different occasional services for the various events of life, from Baptism onwards.

R. As we take part in these we feel them more and more, for ourselves, or for our friends, or for both together. I have told you about the first funeral in which I ever felt a strong interest, that of the young lady whom I had been waiting upon; and when my cousin Margaret was so long ill she found her best comfort in hearing the prayers for the Visitation of the Sick, and in re-

[illegible] the Holy Communion. It made me [illegible] how God's care for us, through the [illegible] of His Church, seems to wrap us [illegible] and find us out in our own homes [illegible] we are sick and weak, or in danger of [illegible] when we cannot seek His blessing [illegible] And when I shared in the [illegible] communion, kneeling by Margaret's [illegible] found guidance for my own [illegible] I could better feel what [illegible] when it came to [illegible] a feel of sickness.

[illegible] you about [illegible] who is staying with [illegible] you remember, [illegible] church last Sunday, [illegible] and look as [illegible] the church- [illegible] why she [illegible] and said [illegible] that her son [illegible] would tell the [illegible] time. I [illegible] said that [illegible] and that [illegible] [illegible] making it. [illegible] Sermon's [illegible] that they [illegible] remain in

Parsonage, for the sake of trying a milder
:han that in the north of England, where
house is. However, instead of getting
er, he got worse, and died in the Parson-
Mrs. Stanley's maid used to tell me a
ıt deal about him; for she and all the
ants were very fond of him. His father
l when he was only three years old, and
mother had the whole care of him. He
very rich; and she was afraid lest his
es should be hurtful to him by leading
into temptation; but he listened to her
d teaching, and did all that she wished.
en he was twenty-one, he came of age,
hat is, he could do what he would with
money, which was no longer kept for
by his guardians; and the first use he
le of it was to begin building a new
rch, which was very much wanted where
lived. Mrs. Stanley's maid was by
n her mistress laid the first stone, at
ng Mr. Stanley's request; and the cler-
ıan of the parish read some prayers.
:rwards there was a dinner given to the
r of the village; and the young gentle-
ı was there, looking quite well and happy,
glad to see them enjoy themselves. He
l to go and watch the building of the
rch, and plan how to make it handsome;
he grudged no expense for that, and
:d more about completing the church in

the best way than for doing any thing to his own house and park: he said they could keep till afterwards. But, before the church was finished, he fell ill; and he did not live to see it consecrated. He had all the enjoyments in life that he could have,—a tender mother, kind friends, and plenty of this world's riches, with gay spirits and a light heart to enjoy them all; but when he found it was God's will that he should die, he laid himself down peacefully on his bed of sickness; for he had so learned to live that he could "dread the grave as little as his bed." And his mother could give him up into God's keeping, Who has promised, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." I saw her following him to his grave, for she felt it would be a comfort to her: so she went to our little church to his funeral, and Mrs. Seymour went with her. It made me think of the widow of Nain and her only son. And Mr. Seymour came out to meet her with those words: "I am the resurrection and the life." Do read the "Burial of the Dead" in the "Christian Year," and you will understand how we felt them. Mrs. Stanley could hope that her son had, by God's grace, kept his baptismal garment undefiled, and that therefore he would be of the number of those to whom *our Lord* promises, "They shall walk with

me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev. iii. 4).

A. No wonder that her countenance was so sad and yet so sweet, when she came out of church on Sunday. She must have felt her own loss, and her son's gain. So, in all sad times, where you have been present, you have found the comfort of the services in the Prayer-book?

R. Yes, whenever one could hope that they were performed for a real Christian, for one who had lived in God's faith and fear. I have felt the comfort of them too in what we call joyful times; for without them what true joy could we feel? How could we have any confidence in mere earthly joy, such as a day might take away? I never feel the comfort of them more than at the marriage of a friend,—when one must feel the changes and uncertainties of life: but God's blessing is bestowed upon His servants, if but they truly serve Him. You know Lucy Brook?

A. To be sure I do,—that nice, cheerful-looking woman, that I walked with you to see one day last month. I told you how I liked her pleasant, brisk manner; and you told me she always made the best of things, and that she had been such a good fellow-servant to you when you lived with Mrs. Andrews.

R. Yes, I never knew her complain; and she had more than good spirits and good temper — she had good principles too. I have gone with an aching heart to the weddings of one or two of my fellow-servants, when they seemed to have but a bad chance of happiness; but I went to Lucy's cheerfully, though it was a poor man that she married.

A. And yet their cottage looked comfortable; and their children were very neat; and they made us welcome to drink tea with them.

R. Yes, because Lucy is a good manager; and her husband is a hard-working, sober man; and they did not marry in a hurry, before they had any thing to begin housekeeping with, but Lucy had been laying by for ten years that she was in service after they were engaged.

A. That was a long while to wait.

R. Yes; but you would not have had her think of marrying at twenty, which was her age when she promised to marry him; and for waiting so long, though of course it was a trial to them, yet it is a trial that often happens to the sons and daughters of gentlemen, as well as to poor people, if they have not enough to live according to their station. Lucy kept quite steadily to William Brook, when once she had promised

to marry him; but she had refused him at first.

A. Why was that? Was not he going on in a good way?

R. He was always a steady young man, not given to drinking or bad company; but the thing was, he seldom came to church.

A. Did not he care about coming?

R. He had been persuaded by some of his friends to go to a meeting-house instead; and if he came to church, it was only for the sake of seeing Lucy. He told her, that if she would marry him, she should still go to church if she liked, and he might sometimes go with her.

A. I suppose that did not satisfy her?

R. Why, no; that would have been but an uncomfortable prospect for her: and I do not know how she could have looked up to her husband and respected him properly, if she had seen him so little settled in the most important matter of all, as to go to church to please her, and to meeting that he might please himself or some of his friends. Lucy was not then nineteen; but, young as she was, she had too much sense to agree to William Brook's plan, though she liked him well enough. She told him her mind plainly; and he left off coming to see her for some time. But he took to going to church regularly; and when he could tell her that he

had been for a whole year, and had left the meeting, and she believed that he was honest in telling her that his mind was quite made up about it, she agreed to marry him as soon as she prudently could. They were obliged to wait the longer, because she had a sick mother, to whom she used to send part of her savings every year.

A. I suppose they go to church together now.

R. That they do, and take their children; and I believe they have but one heart and mind about going to church, as well as every thing else.

A. William Brook must thank his wife now for bringing him back to his church. How came he ever to leave it?

R. I do not know. Some people leave their church for very idle reasons—merely for love of change, or because the time or the place of the meeting suits them better. They could hardly do this, if they thought about what St. Paul says of the sin of schism, and the offence of those who cause divisions; but the truth is, they do not think about it. It is no business of ours to judge our neighbours; they may in this matter sin from ignorance: it better becomes us to call to mind the petition in the Litany, and pray God to *forgive* us not only our sins, but "our *negligences* and *ignorances*," for such we have of

our own to answer for. As to those persons who have not been brought up to go to church, of course they have much more excuse. In all these cases, God only can tell how much blame rests with each person; but we may be sure that no small blame must fall to *our* share, if we should ever stray from our holy mother the Church, after we have learned that she is established by God Himself, and given to us for a guide. Let us think of the last stanzas of St. Luke's Day in the "Christian Year," and pray to be kept from worldliness and unsteadiness.

"Ah, dearest mother, since too oft
The world still wins some Demas frail
Even from thine arms so kind and soft,
May thy tried comforts never fail!

When faithless ones forsake thy wing,
Be it vouchsafed thee still to see
Thy true fond nurslings closer cling,
Cling closer to their Lord and thee!"

## DIALOGUE X.

*Amy.* The Confirmation is fixed for next Thursday week: Mr. Seymour gave me my ticket to-day, and said that he was very well satisfied with my answers when he examined me; but I know, Rachel, that it is not enough to repeat what I have been taught, but that I must think over seriously all God's blessings and all my duties, and that I must repent of all my faults, and heartily resolve to improve.

*Rachel.* Yes, dear Amy; and I do believe you are quite in earnest; and I trust that you will persevere, by God's help. We were talking of the interest that we take in the services of the Prayer-book, when performed for our friends, in the troubles or in the changes of life: and as you know that I take an interest in you, you cannot doubt that I must think very seriously, and feel very warmly about your confirmation, when

all the blessings given to you in baptism are to be renewed to you, and you on your part are to renew your baptismal vow, and to go on from thenceforth, I trust, steadily, as one who has professed a good profession before many witnesses. You say that the Confirmation is fixed for Thursday week,—that is St. Andrew's Day, the first festival of the year, and so you will begin Advent, and with it the new year of the Church, fresh from the blessing that you are about to receive; and I trust that at Christmas you will be admitted to that highest privilege which we can possess in this world—the communion of the body and blood of our Lord. Perhaps, dear Amy, you may not at first *feel* the full extent of the privilege; it is enough if you *believe* it, if you try heartily and steadily to prepare yourself as well as you can, using such books as you have upon the subject. You must go to the altar of the Lord with awe,—but you may go with hope and humble trust; and though you may not find any great change in yourself at first after receiving, yet if you go on receiving this food of our souls as often as you have the opportunity, you will be strengthened and refreshed. I am almost afraid to say much about it in my own words, it seems so far above me; but we know what the Catechism says, and the Communion Service; and we

know how, when our Lord was on earth, sick people went in faith to touch Him, and were healed: so should we draw near to Him at His table, and gain healing for our souls. We should trust Him as much as if we saw Him there present, since we are approaching Him in the way He has appointed. We can gain warmth from the sun though it is many thousand miles from us—more miles than we could count; how much more may we gain from our gracious Saviour the blessings that He has promised, when we come for them in the manner in which He has told us to come!

A. I am glad you have reminded me that the Church year is ending, and that the next will be soon beginning, for I ought to begin it fresh, as you say, and try to make it the best year I have lived yet.

R. Yes, surely, dear. And that you may prepare for this, try now to look back at the year you have just passed. Think of all the help that the Church has offered to you—of all her holy seasons both of rejoicing and of mourning; and while you ask forgiveness for your carelessness and forgetfulness of the due use of them, for all your "negligences and ignorances," pray earnestly that if God spares your life, the new year may find you far more attentive to all the Church's solemn *teaching*, and shewing forth the fruits there-

of, not only with your lips, but in your life,—serving God better and loving Him more.

A. And then I shall not have cause at the end of it to be sorry that another year of my life is gone.

R. There is no sadness at the close of the year to God's faithful servants. I have read a comparison between the natural year, as it is called,—the year that is measured by the sun, and the Christian year, or the year of the Church. The natural year would bring us melancholy thoughts, if we had only that, for every week would seem to be bringing us nearer to death; and as the shadow passes on, whilst the sun runs his course from morning till evening, so would our life seem to be going away. The natural year brings a variety of flowers: first snow-drops, then primroses and violets, then with the summer come roses and lilies; and when spring and summer have passed, with their flowers, autumn brings waving fields of corn, and trees loaded with fruit. But the sun has run his course, and flowers, and harvests, and fruits are past. We only see (as now we are seeing) the leaves drop from the trees, and the bare branches remaining. Not so the Christian year—that awakens hopes which shall never die. Every Sunday we look, as if through a green avenue of trees, to the eternal city.

In the close of autumn, as now, when the wind sounds bleak through the bare boughs, and the clouds drive along the sky—at this time, when the face of nature is sad, the Church begins her Advent chant of happier things, and leads us on to the dawn of Christmas, to the light of our Saviour's coming. In the darkest depth of winter we see that Christmas light. As spring comes on, the Church speaks to us with a solemn warning voice; and whilst Nature is preparing to put on her summer array of beauty, the season of Lent calls us to prepare for the great festival of the year. We are sobered and chastened by the penitential season, before we are admitted to partake of our full joy. Lent closes with that most holy week of our Lord's passion, when we see Him in His agony and on His cross. Then comes the Easter rejoicing, prolonged till Whitsuntide, when, as the Jews celebrated the feast of the first-fruits of the ground, so we celebrate the pouring forth of the Spirit, and we learn that He works many blessed and various effects, as the earth produces plants and trees of various kinds. The great festivals of the year close with Trinity Sunday, when we look up to the ever-blessed Three in One, as out of sight, yet over us and around us, like the sky that overarches all. And from thence *till the* year ends, we receive life-giving pre-

cepts, heavenly helps, and true unfading hopes, through the successive Sundays after Trinity. Thus, year by year, the Church's holy lesson is the same, not changed by any disquiets of the world; such it has been for many hundred years past, and no troubles of earth have had power to stop its course. Many thousands of Christians have been thus trained up for their eternal home, and have learned to feel themselves sharers in that communion of saints, in which we see the bright examples of those holy men of old whose memory is preserved by the appointed saints' days; and above all, and through all, they have seen their Lord, in all the events of His life on earth, and in His government of the Church since He sat down on the right hand of glory. The varied Sundays and holydays are like the forms and colours of a painted window, through which our Lord shines upon us, as the sun shines through the glass.

A. And as the Christian year ends, we ought to feel, not merely there is another year gone, but that we are so much nearer heaven.

R. So we ought to feel, if we have not wasted our year. God grant that we may not waste it; that we may draw near to Him in His church, in His ordinances, in His

Word; that we may draw near to Him in our daily duties; and that we may draw near to Him as He is manifested in His creation and providence.


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